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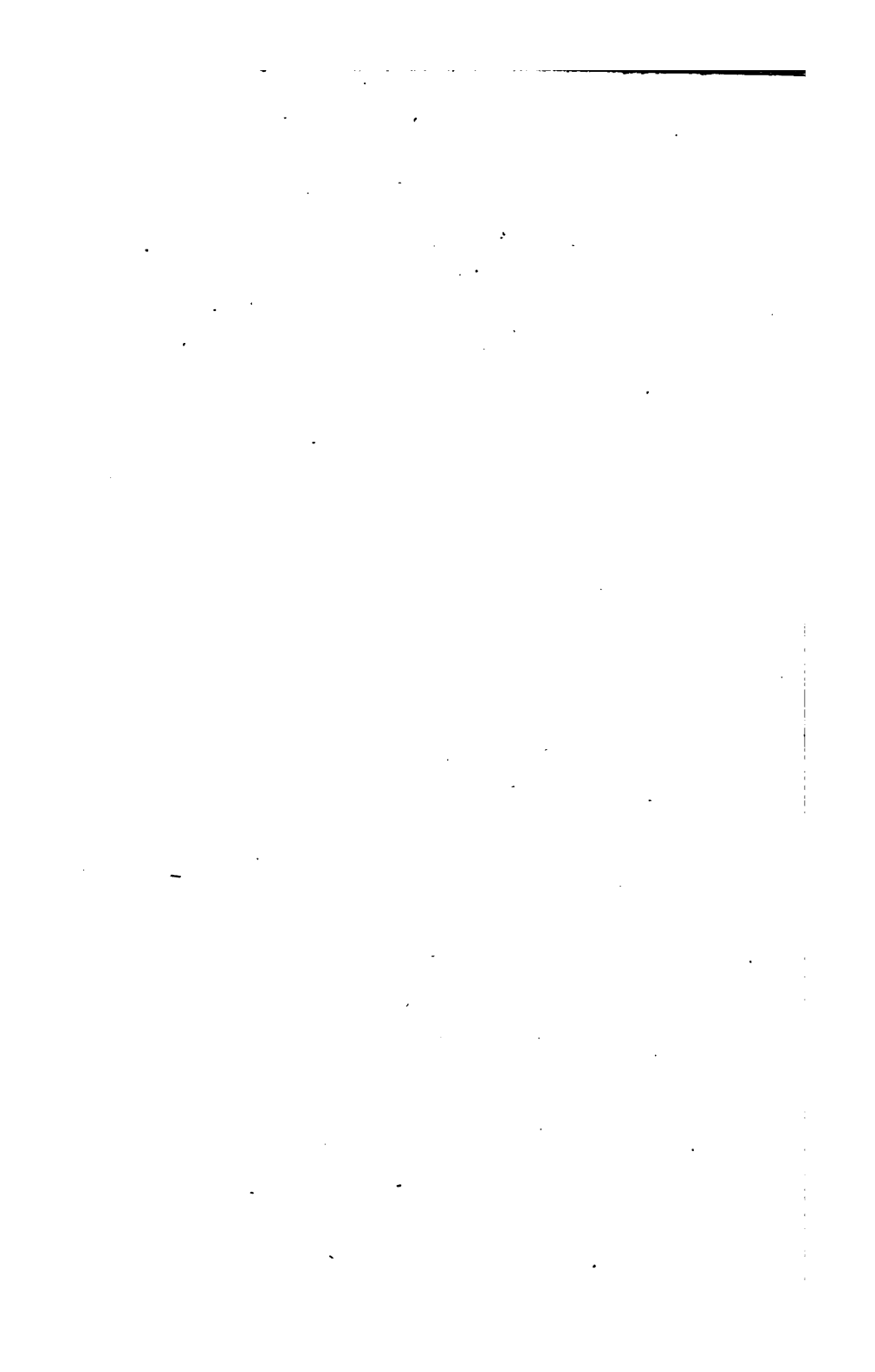




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E. S. H. 1832

DEPENDENCE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF *LITTLE SOPHY*,
AND
RECOLLECTIONS OF A BELOVED SISTER.

"It is well to keep the secrets of a king, but it is good to declare
the loving kindness of the Lord."

"The thought of our past years in me doth breed
"Perpetual benedictions."

DERBY:
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1830.

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TO MY HUSBAND.

I think there is no one to whom I can inscribe this work with so much propriety as to you, for it is in compliance with your wishes that I have endeavoured to depict the trials of a life of Dependence. The public has sanctioned with its approbation my other little works, which were written without any idea of being ever submitted to its ordeal ; if it should not receive this as favourably, which has been prepared with more care and attention, you will suffer more from the disappointment than I shall, because you anticipate more fully a favourable result.

For myself, I am not indifferent to the opinion of any one, but it does not become me to profess myself so sanguine as you are, or the kind friends who have honoured these letters by their perusal and approbation. It should be sufficient for me that *you*, who know my motives, and whose good opinion is of more value to me than all the world besides, approve of what I have done ; and, in the great day of account, it will be well for me, if, in this and in every other undertaking, it may be said, “ she hath done what she could.”

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following letters were written under circumstances of peculiar interest to the writer. They comprise a portion of her life, during which she was compelled to struggle with many difficulties and trials. At a very early age she was thrown upon the world, entirely dependent upon her own exertions. Such a lot is not uncommon: but the writer laboured under peculiar disadvantages. She had not been educated in such a manner as to enable her to meet the taste of the age: and she did not therefore join her competitors in the same arduous department on equal terms. Her deficiencies prevented her from occupying the station, or from acquiring the confidence, which would have ensured success, by the exhibition of accomplishments which are more valued than any other qualification.

To those who are "at ease in their possessions" it may not be wholly useless to contemplate the difficulties of such a path. The writer hopes she may confidently invite the attention of the young of her own sex, whose circumstances place them above the evils of Dependence, and who may perhaps only know how to judge of such trials from the pages of fiction. If, by this sober detail of truth and nature, they are taught more fully to estimate their own mercies, they will have no right to consider their time misspent in the perusal.

But above all the writer will rejoice, if it may in any instance lead to a more kind consideration of that most unfortunate class of beings, who may so emphatically be said to "spend their strength for that which is not bread, and their labour for that which satisfieth not." It is not meant to be asserted that Governesses would be more pitiable than other dependent persons, if their services were more adequately remunerated. Their chances of comfort are much upon a par with private tutors; but how differently are they considered! Whilst their minds ought to be equally refined, and equally well informed, their salary is often but a bare pittance, just enabling them to keep up a respectable appearance, and totally precluding them from making any provision against sickness or

old age. The private tutor it is well known may claim from two hundred to five hundred pounds a year ; nor is he overpaid for his arduous duties. But the writer is often pained by reading advertisements for governesses, and from persons who openly profess religious principles, requiring every possible acquirement and accomplishment, and offering, with an appearance of perfect self-satisfaction, a salary of fifty pounds per annum. Are these the followers of him "who was crucified to the world," who thus take advantage of the necessities of their fellow creatures ? Will they plead that they cannot afford to give more ? Why then do they seek to educate their children above their station ?

But the writer is over-stepping her present limits. From the quiet security of domestic retirement in the bosom of her family, she looks back on the scenes which these letters depict, with unspeakable gratitude to the gracious Power which "spread a table for her in the wilderness," and led her safely through the "wide howling waste."—Perhaps she may be thought to speak with undue asperity of that prevailing taste, which reverses the superstructure of female education by making the ornaments of the building the foundation ; but she must be permitted to add, that mature years and much experience have only confirmed the opinion of her youth.

It has been suggested that the narrative, (if such it may be called) might be sent forth in a more popular form than that of letters ; but the writer thinks it would then require a more artificial construction than she is capable of putting together. In fact, if there is any merit in these letters, it must consist in their simplicity. And why should they be less interesting in their original form ? We tolerate letters which give an account of the different countries through which the author may be travelling, and we read with interest the description of the manners and customs of the inhabitants ; why should we not receive, at least with equal interest, details which afford us examples of the infinite varieties of the human species—which may perhaps unfold to us some of the unexplored intricacies of the human heart ?

DEPENDENCE.

LETTER I.

TO MISS T. G—

My dear Friend,

YOUR letter is very delightful to me, I did indeed begin to think that you had given me up for an ungrateful girl, and it was a great relief to my mind to know that you judged of me with your usual kindness and candour, after all the cross incidents that prevented our meeting again whilst I was in town. But indeed *internal evidence* ought to convince you that I should have rejoiced to see you. Tossed about as I was among artificial characters, and wearied with their frivolities and uninteresting pursuits, it would have been a refreshment even to have looked at you. Your friends may put on my movements whatever construction they please, but I cannot suffer *you* to think of me otherwise than I am. When you know more of me you may find many faults, but ingratitude for kindness that has soothed and healed my heart, will never be in the number. I do not suddenly admit a guest *there*. Misfortune, I believe, gives to her children a pride, or delicacy, which makes them shrink even from kindness in a stranger. They shun observation, and would

rather brood over their sorrows in secret, than accept of pity and consolation before they are well assured as to the source from whence they spring. *You* may always act with confidence on these occasions. Your manner will never wound, and your active benevolence is formed, I doubt not, to sooth many a mourner in their passage through this dreary world, which too often seems to me only a "waste howling wilderness."

You could have asked me many things, you say, if you had seen me, which you cannot do upon paper. Put away this delicacy, my kind friend, and ask me any thing that you wish. I shall know the motive, and things that would humble others, are far from having that effect on me. For instance, I am not ashamed of poverty. I should never hesitate to tell you that I am destined to depend for my daily bread upon my own exertions. I promise to answer any question that you may ask, with truth and sincerity, and, what will be more to you, without pain. I can anticipate that you wish to know exactly my present circumstances. I believe you already know that I am the eldest daughter of a clergyman, who died rather suddenly about three years and a half since, leaving his family wholly unprovided for. How we have scrambled through the time that has passed since, it would just now be too much to tell you. It may be sufficient to say that I was considered too young to enter upon the usual course of teaching others; and it was therefore thought a singular piece of good fortune that Mrs. M—— wanted a person to

be continually with her. Happily she wished for a very young woman; and her natural temper, you very well know, as well as her peculiar disorder, had made it impossible for any relation to bear all that was to be endured by a constant companion.

However I have no wish to complain. I have been three years sheltered under her roof; and as it was her whim that I should all that time be represented as on a visit, (though you may believe that I never wish to lend myself to any deception) some may possibly have been ignorant of my real situation, especially as the relatives who came to the house were so very kind to me. I have suffered a good deal, but I am young, and have, I sometimes fancy, a portion of the elasticity of youth; for I cannot but remember that, notwithstanding my separation from all the friends of my family, and many other disagreeable things, I have had much enjoyment in my residence at G——. There was a good deal of society, and I had the full advantage of it. I had always a great desire to please, and every body seemed to be pleased with me; at least, I may say, every body was extremely kind to me: so that upon the whole I fear I must not expect such an easy life for the future; but I must try to trust in the kind Providence which has raised me up so many friends.

I am sure I may esteem it one of the especial blessings of my life, that during the last summer of my residence at G—— you came into the neighbourhood; and how should I have got through the last few weeks if you had not been in the house to cheer and

support me? It was on my account that you accepted the invitation; and how little we know what is for our real good! I remember how I sighed over the thought of the new call for exertion that your presence would cause to me. Well, I must not look back. I must gird up my mind for the future. My present object is to find out some lady, who will be so good as to let me try my inexperienced hand upon her children; and as I am deficient in many of the requisites, I am afraid it will be no easy task to find such a person. It must however be done, and, kind as my friends are, I care not how soon. I cannot but know that, however friendly people may be towards you, it is no light thing to admit a person for a guest whose stay may be prolonged to an indefinite period, who has in fact no home, and no means to provide one.

I have staid as long as I thought it expedient with my friends in town, and at this place, and I now purpose going down to my native village, where I have more friends, and seem to have more claim on their kindness. I dread the journey, and have waited some time in the vain hope that some employment would have been found, that would have saved me the pain and expense of this step, but it will not be. People have ceased to want governesses I think, for there seems no call whatever for such articles. I have stood in the market, and nobody will bid for me. I will write when I am at W——. In the mean time, farewell.

LETTER. II.

TO MISS T. G——.

My dear Friend,

I had a very dreary journey. The coach did not reach S—— till late in the evening, too late for me to go on to the place of my destination that night. There was a moon as clear and bright as ever shone upon a heroine of romance ; and by its cold pure light I recognized my own country in all its native flatness. I tried to find something of the affection which I have heard some people express, and I have no doubt really feel, for the place of their birth, but in my case it would not be. I can understand attachment to persons better than to places. Perhaps, however, if I had been in happier circumstances, I might have felt or fancied something of the kind ; but, as it was, I seemed like a stranger in my own land, a forlorn wanderer, who had been cast out, and was now returned without welcome or even recognition. This indeed was partly my own fault, for I had a great repugnance to any greetings from common acquaintance, so I tried by all means to escape the notice of the master of the Inn where the coach stopped. I had been accustomed to see him occasionally from a child, for he holds a farm in our parish, and used of course to pay tithe to my father.

I began to think myself quite safe, and was lost in a reverie by the fire-side, when the chambermaid, who had been particularly kind and attentive, forced me to look at her, by stopping before me, and lamenting

that I "*fared* sotired," adding, "I see, Miss, you have forgotten Betsy Alstone." I did indeed find it somewhat difficult to recognise, in this smart and very pretty girl, the dirty "*marwther*" who used to bring our letters and newspapers from the Heath. I hope my provincialism is not lost upon you. I soon made my peace with Betsy, and we had much "fair discourse." She gave me the whole history of her family, and really that of her brother might form a very useful tract. He was always a good boy, I remember, at our A, B, C, school, and it seems that, by the help of some relation, he was sent to a tradesman in London to sweep out the shop, run on errands, black shoes, and so on. Here, by quiet industry, and by resisting some powerful temptations to defraud his master, he obtained his favour, and was the means of detecting a plan for a burglary. In short, his conduct was proved to have been so upright, that his master presented him with a silver box, with some lines engraved upon it to tell on what occasion it was given. The boy sent it down to his parents, who are very poor, and I fear very worthless; at least the father was, and this makes the conduct of the boy more extraordinary. According to Betsy's account, he is taken into the shop, and is in the high road to fortune. I ventured to animadvert on Betsy's own situation, and gave her some very sage counsel, which she received with a simper and a downcast eye, and perhaps was not sorry to wish me good night.

I found my friends at B—— very kind; but, even in the short space of three years that I have been ab-

sent, I find many extraordinary changes have taken place. Here is Mrs. P——, whom I left mistress of G—— house, and a dozen servants, living in lodgings with only one, and suing her husband for a divorce in the ecclesiastical court, on the ground of cruelty. She is a sad proof, if any was wanting, of the misery that generally attends a run-away match. She was an heiress, and kept very strictly on account of her beauty and fortune. She ran off with Mr. P—— because, as she herself tells, he promised to take her to London! She was quite a child, but, as you will guess, very weak and frivolous. She has however been very kind to us, and I feel myself more bound than ever to show her attention, now that she is in a situation which I cannot but call unhappy. Not that she feels it so, for she laughs immoderately at my idea of her misery. The fact is, I believe, that she enjoys the excitement of her present circumstances. The whole affair only seems to her as happening very seasonably, to disturb the monotony of a country life, and take her from the society of a man, who was always she confesses very disagreeable to her.

She took me over to E—— Hall. I longed for the meeting with my friend there, yet I dreaded it. I had not heard from her for a long time. Her cares had been entirely engrossed by her father. She used to be very fond of me, but in three years the affections may be changed. In short, I raised a hundred phantoms to destroy the pleasure I had hoped to enjoy. I could not help many bitter feelings as we drove through the grounds, where my “careless

childhood" had been used to "stray;" and I could not but feel many heart-beatings as we were ushered into the sitting-room with something more than the customary form. Miss E—— has a cold and dignified manner to common acquaintances; and as she never liked Mrs. P——, it was not to be expected that her late conduct would operate in her favour so far as to procure her a different reception. I thought I had never seen any thing so chilling and distant as her deportment. She scarcely deigned to look at me, and I forgot that she is very near-sighted, and that I am very much altered, so I stood like a statue in the middle of the room, till Mrs. P—— mentioned my name, and then you would have loved Miss E——, if you had witnessed the sudden change in her manner. "My own dear girl," she said, "how often I have wished to see you! It is but yesterday that your old nurse and I were talking about you." She did every thing she could to raise my spirits, took me into the hot-house and garden to show me the plants which I had given her before I went away, and which she had preserved with so much care, and in the end insisted upon my coming to her immediately; so here I am, and I feel so sheltered, so much at my ease and at home, that I am quite a new creature.

Her father is in town, and we are in this solitary old place all by ourselves. There is no house nearer than the village, and we see nobody but the old gardener, who is as cross as old age and rheumatism ever made any body. Yet you would fancy his society was very fascinating to us, for we cannot help assisting him

to plant and transplant, and make believe to be doing great things before the frost comes. I grub in the mould, and make dirt puddings for the plants as I used to do, and am quite happy till I remember that there are other plants which I am destined to look after, and whose *young ideas* I must teach to shoot. Miss E—— smiles when she sees me very busy, and says, “now you are quite in your element, child.” She is a good deal older than I am, and remembers me, as she says, “a thin squalling brat.” Her character, I think, is not a common one, it has more strength than tenderness. She never knew a mother’s care : at a very early age she was taught to think and act for herself, and was made to take the reins of government, and act the mistress here, almost when other girls of her age are in the nursery. This may have given a tinge of gravity or reserve to her manner which is unusual, but it must be admitted that on all occasions she has conducted herself admirably.

We have no neighbours to break in upon us, and our fire-side is so quiet and tranquil in these long evenings ! I sometimes think how very few men there are that I know, whom I should be willing to admit, and who would not spoil our comforts. There might perhaps be a chosen few selected from the herd, but else I am ready to cry with Mrs. Malaprop, “my dear, the men are all barbarians.”

Farewell.

LETTER III.

TO MISS T. G——.

My dear Friend,

I have to thank you for two kind letters, but I waited till I could give you some satisfactory information, before I taxed your patience again with a list of my failures and disappointments. You have already been informed that I lost the situation which you were so anxious I should obtain, with Mrs. D——. I could not honestly say, that I was competent in any way to the instruction of girls so far advanced as she represented her eldest daughters; but my ignorance of music was the bar which she could not get over. The correspondence which I had with Mrs. D—— prepossessed me very much in her favour. After writing her an account of myself, and all my wonderful perfections, she says, “I have perused, and reperused your letter, with increased regret that such a mind should be rejected merely for the sake of frivolous accomplishments.”

I did not know that I had depended on this lady, till I felt the pain and disappointment of her rejection. No wonder that I am disposed to quarrel with accomplishments, when I suffer so much from the want of them. I had just made up my mind that there was no hope for me in this world, when I received a letter from an Irish lady, who is in London for a season, and who seems very willing to dispense with accomplishments, to secure a confidential person that can come quickly. And so I am preparing my-

self to quit all these kind friends, and face a house full of strangers. I do assure you I have employed my time in very dry studies, in order the better to prepare myself. I have not been reading poetry as you expect. Oh ! you wolf in sheep's clothing, who would have thought you such a determined enemy to all the flowers of life, when you were reading the associate Minstrels in days gone by !

And so you really think that imagination should be kept in the back ground, and our actions should be guided by principle instead of feeling ! “*You always wish to be so.*” Well, my dear friend, if you could persuade all the world to *act* as you do, I should have no reason to complain. You say you have no flights of fancy any more than my dear excellent Mrs. F——. I have often thought that when “time has thinned your flowing hair,” you will be just like her ; and when I remember her, quietly practising every possible virtue from principle, and meekly elevated above the wish of human approbation, I am ready to acknowledge that this kind of excellence is above all others. And do you not remember how a wiser head than mine settled it by the Thames' side, one fine morning, that it was more flattering to our self-love to possess the affections of such persons, because their sincerity and stability were more to be relied on ? How happy then am I ! and in one point of view I deserve it, for my affection for you both is pure and ardent.

I cannot however dismiss the subject, without saying something for the party on the other side. I

have no powers of argument, so I shall just bring forward a living advocate in support of the moon-struck visionaries that you so soberly condemn. I beg leave to introduce a lady whose imaginative powers have been highly cultivated, who is what the world calls romantic at fifty, and who has yet fulfilled every duty in life, who was the best of daughters, and is now the tenderest of wives, the most devoted of friends, admirable in the minutest concerns of her household, and, finally, one whose extraordinary kindness has cheered my heart, and lifted me quite above the miseries of life. I think I told you that, just as my engagement with this Irish lady was about to close, I received an application from Lady A—— for her grand-child. I was extremely sorry to decline it, but I thought myself in honour bound to the other, so I did what I knew was right. The offer of this situation had been obtained by a lady who resides near London, and who had been requested to interest herself for me by a friend in this place. I was not personally known to this lady, but some acknowledgment was thought due on my part for the trouble she had taken. No answer was expected by me, and you may judge of my surprise and delight, when, on opening a frank, I found a letter from her, in which she says that my letter “had awakened in her so much interest, that she had been led to make inquiries in my own neighbourhood. The result of this was the increase of the peculiar interest which I had excited. Perhaps however this would not have been made known to me, if it had

not occurred to her, that in the event of my going to Ireland, she might be enabled by her connexions there to lessen in some degree the feeling of being alone in a strange land." She added, "will you think it extraordinary if I ask to hear from you of your future plans and prospects? Will you not take it as the warm tribute that is paid to mind and merit by every one capable of estimating their worth? I have really no reason to assign, no apology to offer, for making this request, but the great interest and sympathy you have awakened, and believe me I shall be happy to prove this in any other way than by mere profession."

Now, I am sure you are ready to acknowledge that this woman is one of the excellent of the earth. I heard her spoken of some little time since by some common-place person here, and described as the most fascinating of women, in whom it was impossible to find a fault, except that of being as romantic and enthusiastic as Mrs. Grant. "What at fifty!" I said (by the bye she is only forty) "Oh! I would give the world to know her!"—I answered her letter in all the warmth of the moment, any sober person would have thought me mad; and I had some after qualms and apprehensions even about *her*; but she said, "every word came warm from your heart and found its way to mine. I must know you, and see you face to face. You are coming to London; and I quite solicit a visit from you in your way. The time will exactly suit us, for our house is seldom empty. My carriage shall be in waiting, and if I

am not in it, Mr. R—— has promised to attend, for you have created a most friendly interest in his kind heart. He shall be identified by a note from me, and his benevolent manner and good-humoured countenance will soon set you at ease. What shall I say to you about your fanciful association of my idea with Mrs. Grant's; and what will you say to my apparent vanity, when I tell you that, from several of my friends, I have received the same gratifying compliment? But the praises of friendship are dearer to the heart, than they are dangerous to self-love. They delight, but they do not delude. When I receive them I bless the partiality of the bestower, but I cannot attach them to myself as truths incontestable to others."

I hope you will not be tired of my new friend, I will not easily forgive you if you do not love her. A very prudent woman here advised me to take care to improve Mrs. R——'s favour, *because*, from her situation in life and her connexions, she might be of great use to me in future! How my very soul rose and spurned at her sordid nature! It never occurred to me before, but my cheeks burned when I reflected, that perhaps Mrs. R—— herself might think that my warinth and eagerness arose from selfish motives, but I soon dismissed the idea as injurious to her. In my next letter I shall have to tell of my introduction to her in person.

On Monday I set off. I shall feel great pain in parting with a great many persons here, but none in leaving this country; indeed I rather congratulate

myself on going away from a place which is so full of painful recollections. You may perhaps wonder at me, but I have never visited my own native village, though I have been now so many weeks within half a mile of it. From the window at which I sit, I can see the chimneys of the rectory; and in former days, when I was staying here, I used to watch to see if there was a fire in my father's study. I am told it is now converted into a breakfast room. Every thing is changed. The heath, which I held in most affectionate remembrance, is enclosed by the exertions of the new rector. I owe him a grudge if it were only for that; but I could even quarrel with him for having had the roads mended, and the hedges cut in such trim order. "I suppose it was for the sake of that fine carriage," I said as he passed me the other day upon the road. But these are very unworthy feelings, so I will not dwell upon them in remembrance. Farewell.

LETTER IV.

TO MISS T. G—

Well, my dear girl, I hope you are anxious to hear of my new friend, so I will begin at the beginning. After a long journey, which sufficiently wearied me for one day, I found a note waiting for me at the inn where the coach stopped, to explain the reason of there being another person instead of the one that I expected, to convey me to Mrs. R——'s beautiful residence, which seemed

to me, in the bright moon-light, more like a fairy palace than any thing belonging to this workday world. It is an irregular building, which has been enlarged at different times, according to the convenience and taste of the different occupiers; but she has contrived to cover all its incongruities; and her passion for gardening has converted, what I am told was only a waste, into a most tasteful and delicious wilderness of sweets. She herself stood in the porch, looking like the enchantress of the scene. She held out her hand to me, and after bidding me welcome in the most cordial manner, led me into the dining-room, and introduced me to her husband, who was already seated at supper.

She is a most agreeable looking person. Her face I should say has no "hairbrained sentimental traces." At the first glance, it gives only the idea of happiness, or rather placidity of temper. You can see no furrows. Time has seemed unwilling to set his mark upon her. You would be ready to set her down for a good-looking commonplace person, till she raised her fine bright hazel eyes, and began to talk; and then you would, besides seeing a fine set of teeth, know at once that you had before you, not only a very intellectual person, but the kindest of human beings, who added all the grace and polish of manner to the charm of pure and native benevolence.

You will easily believe that, although I was much prepossessed in her favour, yet my mind was not in a state to be very easily pleased, or rather it was not in a state to receive pleasure; and yet she was so deli-

cately skilful in her manner, that her own happy lot was made not to jar with mine. She found means to reconcile me to her abundant enjoyment of all that is valuable in life. She rather seems to live for the happiness of others, for it hardly seems possible to be miserable in her atmosphere. I spent one whole day in her "leafy bower," and she showed me her chief treasures among her neighbours. I seemed to be in a new world, and I could have given myself up entirely to its enjoyments, if the doubtful future had not cast so heavy a shadow on my path. On the evening of the second day I set off on my return to town. I watched till the last shrubs and trees of the bower had faded from my view, and then I set myself steadily to "look my fortune in the face." I recalled some of the passages in Mrs. N——'s last letter, and endeavoured to fancy the kind of person that she must be, till the hackney coach was lumbering through the street in which I knew I was to be deposited; and then I was breathless with terror; for I know no other word that will so well express the suffocation which came over me, and which certainly was very unworthy of the philosophy which I had intended to display on this occasion.

At length the horses made a dead stop, and I scarcely know how, but I found myself transferred from the darkness and obscurity of the humble coach to the full blaze of a spacious drawing-room, at the door of which a lady was standing a little in advance of several others, so that she was sufficiently indicated as the mistress of the house, and the arbitress of my

fate. There was nothing very particular in her manner. She is young and pretty looking, with more gravity and precision than you would expect from her years. I do not think she told me the names of any of the other ladies. She desired me to be seated near the fire, and she mentioned me by name to my little pupils, who sat in mute horror of the governess on the opposite side; and then, after a few questions about my journey, &c., she withdrew from the fire, moved about the room a little, and finally seated herself at a distant table with a newspaper, and for the rest of the evening appeared as perfectly unconscious of my presence, as if I had been a table or a chair.

Tea was made by a very pretty girl, who was, I discovered, a younger sister. There were other sisters too, whose names I learned in the course of the evening. There was one in widow's weeds, who came near to me, and spoke in tones of kindness and sympathy that could not be mistaken. I found myself able to talk to *her*; and oh! how I wished that this gentle being had been the mother of my pupils! I made out that she was only there on a visit. Every now and then I cast a fearful glance to the distant table, at which the lady of the house kept her state. She appeared to speak occasionally, but always with an air of authority, and more as if she were setting them to rights, or deciding some disputed point by an opinion which could not be questioned or doubted, than as one who was joining in the conversation on equal terms. In short, I guessed, and every day since has confirmed the idea, that she is generally

taciturn, either from habit or calculation. It certainly is a manner which inspires fear, and keeps every one at a distance ; and I felt that night, when she lighted her candle and left the room, as if I was relieved from the pressure of a great weight. I could talk at my ease, I thought, till she returned ; but I was given to understand that she would not return again. She had retired for the night ; and this silent withdrawing is, I find, the usual custom with all of them.

The servant was ordered to show me to my room ; and as I have introduced you to the drawing-room, I may as well take you with me to an apartment which is not much in keeping with the rest of the house. It is just large enough to contain a small bed, so short and so *hard* that my repose can never be called *soft*. In one corner there is a chair, in the other a little table, between which and the door there is space enough to admit my person, and that is all. To enlighten this spacious apartment there is a window, which had neither curtain, blind, nor window-shutter, and they fully expected me to dress and undress before it, though the opposite window had a tenant, from whose observation it was quite impossible to screen myself. I represented this to the servant, who apologized in every possible way for the utter want of convenience, but said her mistress was not in her own house ; that, when she was at home, I should be magnificently lodged, &c. &c. I heard her very quietly, but renewed my representations for present necessities, till she promised to hang up a curtain ; and after waiting till I was quite chilled with cold,

she returned with a petticoat, which she hung up before the window, appearing to think she had been most happy in her contrivance.

The next morning I entered upon my duties. I found some of the family at the breakfast table. Mrs. N—— preserved the same cold and grave manner. One of the sisters said in a very obliging way, that she feared I did not find myself very conveniently situated. They were all put to many inconveniences, but their stay in England was uncertain. The children are very promising, and I hope to find comfort in *them*, if I fail to do it in other things.

Ever yours.

LETTER V.

TO MISS T. G——

You wonder that I have not written, my dear girl. I thought I would give you a little rest. I wished to wait till I could form a less hasty judgment of my situation in this house. You have sometimes cautioned me against judging too hastily, and I have been accused of “jumping to a conclusion.” I must say in self-defence, that my first impressions are very seldom wrong; in the present instance I heartily wish they had been. As to your hope that Mrs. N—— would see fit to make a friend of me, it is quite out of the question. I am in her eyes only a machine; with whose movements indeed she is, it seems, very well satisfied. So I have been given to understand by others; for her own manners

do not in the least assure me : she is invariably grave and unbending. Her sisters are all very agreeable, but they are only here for a season.

The one, of whom I spoke in my last as a widow, is certainly the most amiable of human beings. I do not know the history of her life, but I should judge from her pale sad countenance that she had drunk deeply of the cup of sorrow. She is so kind and attentive to me that it is impossible to help loving her. She does not go out much ; indeed I believe she never joins their parties of amusement : her principles are too strict to admit of her doing so. It would be well for the cause of religion if all its professors would so adorn the doctrine, and exhibit such fruits of their faith as she does.

With my pupils I go on very well ; and I feel that I can conscientiously say, that I am equal to my duties, as far as they are concerned. The eldest has made some progress in French, but her mamma is so terribly afraid of her not acquiring the true Parisian accent, that she will not suffer her to read the language to any one but a native. A very gentlemanly old abbé comes to hear her read ; the grammatical part is entrusted to me. I always wonder at English mothers having so much anxiety on this point, I should on the contrary rather wish my daughter to speak French like an English woman. At any rate, I should be most particularly anxious that she should never be mistaken for a French woman. My sentiments on this matter are in opposition to those of Mrs. N——so I keep them to myself ; there is, in fact,

very little communication between us. Her time is spent in a round of pleasure, and I see very little of her; but I stay at home, and feel the consequences of her mismanagement, or rather no management at all. I am quite amazed at the way in which we go on. The genius of misrule holds his court here every day. From the drawing-room down to the kitchen nothing is in order; every thing is done by chance; and for our daily food, we are at the mercy of a dirty-looking old Irish woman, who presides in the kitchen in the quality of cook, and who resembles nothing that I ever saw before in human shape. She might do duty for one of the witches in *Macbeth*, without any dressing but her ordinary attire. Well, after the first two or three days, imagine me sitting at two o'clock, waiting for the children's dinner to be sent up. The footman knows nothing about it, but he calls to the kitchen, "Sure the mistress never ordered any!" "Well, send up something."—"But there is nothing."—At length, after a good deal of subterranean grumbling, the scraps of the day before are sent up. I thought it might be an accidental circumstance, so I said nothing at first, but on a repetition of the thing I spoke to their mamma. She said something of the ill-humour of the cook, and of her strange ways, and there the matter ended. I scarcely think she ever troubles her head about either the children's or the parlour dinner. We dine at four, at least so they call it, but it is often eight o'clock before she returns, and then sometimes the keys are lost, and we are obliged

to do without some necessary part of our dinner. But this is nothing to the want of fire. Twice in the first month of my being here, we had no fire in the school-room, because the mistress had forgotten to order any coals, and there were not enough in the house to cook the dinner. Only imagine me wrapt up in shawls, and the poor children with benumbed fingers, and their mamma assuring them that "being cold was all a fancy, and young people ought to be warm, &c." and then asking if the carriage was ready; for somehow or other she never forgets to order *that*, however short her memory is about other things.

My clothes went to the wash with theirs about a fortnight since, and I could not discover what became of them. The maid told me they had forgotten to send for them, and she herself did not know where the washer-woman lived. "But was not this a handkerchief of mine?"—"Yes; how did it come?"—"She did not know, but she would look about the house, when she had time." Accordingly, after a search, my unfortunate clothes were produced not washed. They had been bundled up to supply the place of a pillow for one of the beds, and so they would have continued to do, but for my unceasing importunity. Of course Mrs. N—— knows nothing of all this, but I hold her accountable in some degree for the irregularities of her servants, because her own example in this respect is so exactly in unison with their own national habits. I question much however if any one of these good-natured slip-shod servants could ever be brought to our English order of regularity, the blessed effects of which I was never so well able to

appreciate. I have been three days without a towel in my room; and sometimes, if I may believe M'Donald, there is not a bit of soap in the house: but, "sure I shall have a towel the first moment they come from the wash." That happy moment has not arrived yet.

All these petty discomforts will serve to show you the prospect that I have before me if I leave England with this family. As to establishing any thing like order with my pupils, it seems next to impossible. I may help to make them wild Irish girls, but I shall never engraft the English system upon their habits: I wonder if all Irish families are like this. I have heard Irish ladies complained of as being generally coarse, unfeminine, and even indelicate in their manners; if I might judge of them, however, from this family, I should say that no charge could be more false. It is not possible for any manners to be more feminine and elegant, nor for any minds to be more pure and delicate, than those of the ladies of this house, and indeed of all their friends, as far as I have seen of them.

Ever yours.

LETTER VI.

TO MISS T. G——.

My dear Friend,

I have just been walking part of the way home with our friend Miss R——, and she has told me of the exertions you made, and the unwearied

pains you took for me, when you were in town ; with many other instances of your benevolent care for the good of those, who had no claim upon you but their wants. What a jewel of a girl you are ! When I hear the selfish, “ who are at ease in their possessions,” draw back from assisting a fellow-creature “ because it is so troublesome,” as I heard a lady say the other day, I will remember you, and cease from my abuse of poor human nature.

I am just now very well disposed to think there may be great good even in *Irish* nature. I have been a patient listener to a story, of which Miss Edgeworth might make something, if she knew it. You must know that I have formed an acquaintance with the old Irish woman who keeps an apple stall just by this house, which is a corner one, and she, I suppose, belongs to the street which leads out of this grand one. She first drew my attention by giving the children a rosy apple, and positively refusing to let me pay for it. “ Were they not of her own dear country, and sure she might give them an apple !” Then she told me how it warmed her heart when she heard that an Irish family had taken the house.— “ But I am afraid your situation is not much the better for us.”— “ Oh, but it is though, for it does my heart good to see the ladies step into their *illigant* carriage every day !”—A slight service which I did for her excited so much gratitude, that I fancied she took me for one of her own country, and I said, “ but all this time, I am an English woman.”— “ Oh, but you deserve to be Irish :” and ever since, when

she means to be particularly complimentary, she vows that I have not a bit of an English woman about me !

'To-day, as I stopped to speak with her, before I knocked at the door, a well dressed man asked me the way to some place. I referred him to the old woman as being more likely to know. "Away wid ye," she said in great indignation, "and shame on ye, and all the likes o' ye." The man smiled, and I wondered ; but the old woman said, "you dear young cratur, don't you be after being so civil to people in the street. I know the ways of this bad town to my sorrow." I then asked her, what I had long wished to know, how she came to leave a country that she loved so much, and to take up her abode here. She told me she was a widow with one son ; and he left her to seek his fortune in London. She heard from him sometimes, and she had reason to fear he had formed some bad connexions ; so she sold all that she had, and came over with a good bit of money to take care of him. She found her son on the point of marriage with a very worthless woman, that he had found in the streets. She tried to break off the match, but she could not. "Mother," said he, "I love her ; I love her even better than I do you."—"Hard words these were for a mother to hear ; but I made up my mind not to leave my poor lad, for I saw he was ensnared past help, so he married her, and I lived with them, and I kept my own money in my purse at the bottom of my box ; and sometimes his wife would be a bit kind to him, and then my heart was all open to her ; and then she would keep out all night with her

bad friends, and my poor lad when he came home would lay his head down upon the table for hours together; and when he looked up he would say, 'mother, don't look at me.' Sometimes he would say, 'I shall not bear this long,' for he felt within him that it could not last. I was always there when he came home from his work, and he did not sicken for the want of any thing, but he pined away. His heart was broken within him."

"Just before he died his wife came in. She had been away for several days, for she never came home but when she wanted to get some money. She looked at him as he lay in bed, and she seemed to know how it was without asking, for she went to his clothes, and felt in the pockets. He saw her, and he tried to speak, but the words died in his throat. She muttered a curse on my poor boy as he lay dying, because there was no money in his pockets, and she went out of the room. I did not heed where she went; how could I, when the lad fixed his eyes on me, and grasped my hand, and died! Well, I thought I could bury him decently, for I had still a bit money in my purse; but when I came to look, neither purse nor money was there. She had gone to my box, when she found no money in his pocket, and she had not left me a sixpence. For all that, he had a decent burial; and I sold all that I could, and with the help of my friends I got this sitting, which I had set my heart upon, because it is so near to the church-yard where my boy lies; and every night before I go home, I go down to look at his

grave, and it comforts my heart to see that much of him."

"But it must be very sad to be here in all weathers."—"Not a bit of it: when it rains I have my numperella."—"But would you not be glad to return to your native country, if you could raise money enough?"—"No," she said firmly, "I could not leave my poor boy: I save up my money that I may be laid beside him." I still doubted, and she told me as a proof that she would not go home if she had the means, that the other day she went into a shop to have the stump of a tooth drawn, and there she saw a gentleman who had been obliged to fly the country for his conduct during the rebellion. "I knew him in a moment, and I followed him out. He charged me not to mention his name, and he gave me this golden guinea, and told me he would pay my passage home; but oh, I could not leave my boy; where *his* bones lie, there shall *mine* lie."

Now I hope this story will touch you more than it did Mrs. N——. I was quite full of it, and expected that I should certainly do the poor creature some good by telling her. She heard me with listless apathy, and only "wondered how I could stop to talk to old apple-women in the street." "She is just at the door, at least just at the corner."—"Oh yes, I know where she is. I am surprised that these kind of persons are suffered to set up their stalls in the street. She cannot expect much custom for her apples in such a neighbourhood as this."—"The church-yard is just at the bottom of the street where her son ——."—"Oh, yes, I remember, and you are simple enough

to believe her story.”—I said not another word ; I *looked*, for I felt ashamed of myself, but it was for having made such a mistake as to tell the story to *her*. I could pledge my life on the truth of the old woman ; and so would you, if you had heard her tell the tale yourself.

But now for the application, as poor Mr. C—— used to say in his sermon. You may judge from what I have now told you what my situation in this house is, and what it is likely to be. Mrs. R—— says, “you must not expect your comfort to be increased because they wish to retain you, therefore you may be sure it is now as well as it will ever be. In England it may be endurable, but in a strange land it will be much worse. Nothing can make up for the habitual want of regularity and system in the house, it destroys the comfort of every individual connected with it. But more than all other objections is the heartlessness of Mrs. N—— herself. From this there is no hope ; and I beg you will consider well about resigning your office.” What do you say, my very dear friend ?

Ever yours.

LETTER VII.

TO MISS T. G——

My dear friend,

The letter which you speak of has never reached me, so I only deduce your opinion from the one which is now before me. Your friend, Miss I——, who has been the greatest possible comfort

to me, assures me that you would perfectly coincide with her, and with all my other friends, in opinion, if you were on the spot. I find so many alleviations to the disagreeable things in the house, that I think I should be very willing to remain here if Mrs. N—— would fix her residence in London, but that it seems is not at all likely ; so I think I must be on the look out for some change.

My kind friend Miss F—— has left town. She is really a noble minded creature, but so totally unlike every body about her, and so careless of the opinion of others, that I quite tremble for her when she is with strangers, who cannot be expected to take the trouble to understand her eccentricity. I preach to her in vain : I tell her that it is not only unsafe but unchristian-like to look down with contempt upon the "common herd," as she calls them : She only laughs at me, and still pursues her own proud and unbending course ; except when she thinks she has found a kindred mind, and then she astonishes every body by starting aside all at once, and exhibiting as much extravagance as an ungovernable colt who refuses to submit to the bit and bridle.

The friends with whom she was staying were very commonplace sort of people. They were very civil to me, and invited me to dinner to meet her brother, who has distinguished himself so much at the university. I had known him before his honours, and I always liked his society, so the day passed very agreeably. You would have been amused to see the grave laconic manner of Miss F——. I confess I tried as much as possible to make myself agreeable,

in order to prove to her that I always thought it worth while to please. I was not therefore surprised to hear that I had succeeded with these good people. She retailed their expressions of approbation, and said, "are you not ashamed of yourself for wasting your powers upon such people?" And this was all the good my lesson had done her!

By the bye, I must apprize you, that one of my subjects of conversation with her brother, was the mistake that we all had made respecting the real character of a certain young lady, who in a water-party at G—— had suffered her timidity to obscure her real attractions. Can you guess who I mean? I was quite determined to set him right; and my heart glowed, and my cheeks burned, as I descanted on your merits. In his own cool decisive manner he sketched your real character much more accurately. "Miss G——," he said, "has a strong ardent mind. I should have guessed that it was warmed by native benevolence. She grasps her purpose firmly and steadily. She is a young woman who made me wish to know more of her; for it was easy to see that she had no common mind." There now, is not this a precious morsel of praise from a Cambridge Don? I felt very much inclined to shake him cordially by the hand, for doing you the justice of which some wise heads are not capable; but seeing that he was a handsome young gentleman, and I a lady some few years his junior, I contented myself with smiling upon him, and treasuring up his words as honey for your private eating. He inquired with much kindness about this household, and when he said, I con-

sider the Irish as a people who have every virtuous *feeling* without one virtuous *habit*," I set him down as an oracle. His sister said of him, "he has a noble elevated soul, and a tender feeling heart, but he wants imagination." Now, *you* would say this is not a deficiency. Well, I cannot pretend to settle the point, for I have much weightier matters to attend to.

I have fully made up my mind not to leave this country with Mrs. N——; and what is more, I have told her so. I found it impossible to get up courage enough to tell her this in so many words, I therefore wrote her a note, and expressed myself as civilly as I could, but the inference was of course not very flattering to her. The youngest little girl said to me afterwards, "Mamma says governesses are the plague of her life." I said nothing, but I sighed to think how many more governesses her mamma might be destined to plague.

It is quite delightful to read the raptures of my dear sisters at my not going out of the country. I wish you knew them. I wish you knew the warmth of heart which made my dear Sophy, on a sudden recollection, break out in her last letter—"oh! bless you, my darling sister!" You wonder that I never spoke of them when I first knew you. My dear girl, they are the treasures of my heart, and I seldom produce them to strangers. The truth is, that my separation from them casts such a gloom over my path, that my only chance of maintaining my cheerfulness is not to talk of them. Farewell. You will I know be on the look out for me again.

Yours, &c.

LETTER VIII.

TO MISS T. G——.

My dear Friend,

I am still on the tenter-hooks of uncertainty about my future place of abode. To-day I felt particularly gloomy till I had looked into my Bible. I opened it on that beautiful passage in St. Luke, where our blessed Saviour is speaking of the care of our heavenly Father in feeding the ravens, and clothing the lilies of the field, and asks whether he will not much more clothe his children. I marked the passage, in grateful remembrance of the comfort it gave me.

You ask me what I think of your criticism on Mrs. R——'s poetry. My dear girl, I esteemed you the more for your sincerity, but as I have Mrs. Opie on my side, I will not scruple to say that I did not think it a just one. I am fully aware that I am not likely to be an impartial judge of any production from the pen of this kind friend; and I am also unfit to decide on the merits of poetry which is not of the kind that suits my taste. I will also confess that when I read it myself I could scarcely believe it to be the same. When the charm of voice and manner was added, I fancied I could trace the same playful vivacity and brilliancy of imagination so conspicuous in the manner and conversation of the author. Still however I cannot admit that there are no proofs of imagination in these little pieces. What is imagination? I call it that creative power, which "gives to

airy nothing a local habitation and a name." To say nothing of those sublimer scenes on which it is its peculiar province to expatiate, is it not that power which enables us to shut out realities and sober certainties, and indulge ourselves in worlds of our own creation? Does it not lead us up through the vista of time to the cherished visions of eternity?

Where pallid Fear would never venture,
There heedless hies the airy sprite;
And where Hope cannot, dare not, enter,
She, hovering, wheels her rapid flight.

I have not time to arrange the ideas that crowd upon me, but if you admit that I am right in my definition, then I claim some imagination, if not originality, for the author of the "Man in the Moon."

And why not embody flowers? Is it not desirable to give a new charm to any thing, even though we do clothe it with sentiment? I might answer your objection by the motto she has chosen, "no solitude exists for me." I know not how it is with others, but I always connect some idea of character with plants as well as animals; and what harm is there in adorning the realities of life with these fanciful draperies?

So much for *your* criticism, and now for your two friends. I have a great desire to know who wrote the short one. It bears such evident marks of power for higher themes, that making the writer descend to such a subject was indeed setting "Hercules to the distaff." As to the other, I had rather imagine him than have any further acquaintance. It is so very

easy to find fault, that he must discover some other mode of distinction, or he will be lost in the crowd. I marvel at the ingenuity he has displayed in "mistaking the purport of the author, and in being unable, after several times reading, to discover if it were to the moon, or to some fancied inhabitant, that she addressed herself." Has he no recollection of the golden days of infancy, when I am sure the Man of the Moon occasioned many a cold vigil at my nursery window, and his theft of a cheese, and a bundle of sticks, was one of my favourite stories? This legendary lore is known in all places and countries, I think; and what is more, it is believed even in spite of all the march of intellect. I myself heard an old woman, a very short time since, wonder at the atrocity of a neighbour who had been detected stealing wood one night, "when," as she said, "the moon shone so bright, and if he raised his eyes to it, he must see the man who had been put there for doing the very same thing!" Now do set your friend to work to confute this tradition, for the edification of nurses and old women.

But to return to his present subject. I will not be so presumptuous as to say his criticism is unjust with respect to the ability of the poem; but as to the general object of it, which he is so much at a loss to find out, and about which he is so good-natured and charitable in his suppositions, I *will* say that, far from aiming at the notice of critics, it was merely written to amuse a circle of friends, who love her too well to judge severely of what after all is nothing more than

the sporting of an imagination which loves to dwell on the "songs of other days." I would tell him too that, far from aiming at display, the writer is one who has not "merely skimmed the surface of knowledge." She is well informed, or learned, if he likes the term better, without being dogmatical or arrogant. She is one who adds to the greatest powers of cultivation in manner, every virtue which can adorn humanity. She has trodden the paths of science, without forgetting the duties of the wife, the sister, and the friend; and without departing from the gentleness of womanhood, she has been active and zealous in every good work.

I could find in my heart to be very spiteful with this gentleman; and if I had the ability I would follow him through all the windings of his criticism, and detect him where the indulgence of satirical wit, or the love of a well-turned period, has got the better of his judgment; but, with all the trouble that he has taken to be ill-natured, I feel an interest for him when he says, that he is destined to sober sadness from the adverse incidents of his life. The criticism on the "familiar theme," &c., would be quite sufficient to convince me that this gentleman is too wise and too clever to be a proper judge of the merits of a work of imagination; so I take my leave of him, wondering that he should waste his time so far as to write this elaborate criticism on such a puerile subject.

Well, I think I am cured of poetry. I asked your friend Mr. H—— if he had read something which I, in my simplicity, thought worth even *his* notice. He

told me, with a most exalted air, that he never read *bits* of poetry ; and afterwards, in a note, he assured me it was quite impossible for me to conceive the antipathy which he was compelled to feel, when “butterflies were frisking, and violets were dying, in filmy gauzy gossamery lines.” I told him I had heard that Reginald Heber slept with “Wallace” under his pillow every night, but he seemed to shrink from a poem written by a lady. Some people have no other way of proving their superiority but by finding fault with every thing they read and hear. I had rather be pleased, without exactly knowing why.

I have nothing new to tell you of myself, only that Mrs. N—— has asked me to give up my plan of leaving her family ; but something inclines me to hope that I shall be better provided for in my own country than by going to a land of strangers.

Farewell, my dear Friend.

LETTER. IX.

TO MISS T. G——.

My dear girl,

I will not hesitate to reply to your letter. I will endeavour to explain myself on a subject so deeply interesting, since you appear to have mistaken me on some points. First then, I would tell you that in self-condemnation, I would rather say self-abasement, I do not “add sorrow to sorrow,” and thus darken the hour of adversity. I believe that I am a fallen creature ; that my propensities require

not only to be regulated but changed ; and therefore I ought rather to rejoice in any means that may answer that purpose, knowing that I am chastened in mercy. Do not mistake me. I am not one of those who would court persecution and suffering. Our blessed Lord in his agony exclaimed,, “if it be possible let this cup pass from me,” but he added, “nevertheless not my will but thine be done.” And I would endeavour to say so with an humbling sense of my own unworthiness. I would seek to do his will, and glorify his name ; and if by no other means I may advance the glory of my Creator, yet with his assistance I may be patient and resigned, and believe that all things shall work together for good. I cannot but feel my suffering ; but to believe that such afflictions are necessary, to draw me nearer to the great end and purpose of my being, is to shed a lustre on the gathering cloud, and to cheer the gloomy waste with hopes which the world cannot give.

I can remember the time when I thought of myself with a vast deal of complacency, as a very amiable and even religious person ; and I expected to take a place in heaven, rather as the reward of my own merit, than as bestowed through the merits of a crucified Redeemer. I look back on this state of ignorance with horror, and I bless the Holy Spirit that I am brought to a better knowledge of myself. The Bible is no longer a sealed book to me. I cannot but wonder at my self-deception in the time that is past ; and I now ask myself what I could have thought of the

apostle, when he speaks of a "striving," a "race," and tells us to "put on the whole armour of God," and "work out our salvation with fear and trembling." The truth was, that I did not think of it at all. I was contented to take the matter upon trust. May I tell you, with a deep sense of my own unworthiness, that to "acquaint myself with God and be at peace" is become the grand purpose of my life.

I have always endeavoured to keep "a conscience void of offence." I am free from the commission of gross sin. I have been spared the temptation to it. But I feel that, to make me meet for the inheritance which I hope to gain, much is yet to be done. The conversion of the soul to God is the business of a life; and when I feel my own sinfulness, and know that after I have done all, I must yet be an unprofitable servant, then I feel my need of a Saviour. I know that other righteousness than mine must be accepted of Him "who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity." He has said "the heart of man is desperately wicked." I am convinced of this, for I know that "when I would do good, evil is present with me." I detect sin where I never before suspected it, because I now search deeply, instead of resting on the surface. I enquire into motives, and I find that in my best actions the praise of my fellow-creatures has in too many instances been the actuating principle, instead of the love of God. Thus when the world would acquit me, I stand guilty before him; and am ready to cry with David, "against *thee* only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight."

I am writing you a sermon, you will say ; but the subject warms me. My imagination turns gladly from earthly scenes. Youth, and all its bright and dear illusions, are gradually fading. The dazzling rays of hope and fancy no longer gild the saddened landscape ; but a purer, a stronger, though a less vivid light, has beamed on my path. I have learned to explore the dark wilderness with humble hope ; and I am cheered to think there is a place where I shall enjoy the society of all whom I love, without the passions which here disturb and agitate us ; where the wildest flights of imagination will be surpassed by the sober certainty.

But I must check my pen. I only intended to explain my faith and opinions, and to ask if yours were the same. If they are not, why do they differ ? I love you too well to be indifferent about any thing that very nearly concerns you. Indeed, my dear friend, who can reflect on the difficulty of the work of salvation — the purity of mind — the self denial — the abstraction from a world which solicits us on every side — in short, the total change of character which must be effected, before we can be admitted to Heaven, or enjoy it if we could be admitted there — and not tremble ? The merits of a Saviour, and his promised assistance, do however save us from despair. “ My grace is sufficient for thee.”

Pardon me, my love, if before I finish I advert to another part of your letter. “ The love of self is implanted in us, and therefore must be a good principle.” Now Hannah More says “ it is the great

hydra which is always springing up to oppose our progress. It is the centre of the unrenewed heart ; it works in a course of incessant contradiction with the love of God ; it is the ever flowing fountain of all the evil tempers which deform our hearts, of all the boiling passions which inflame and disorder society." Till this idol is dislodged, and the love of God implanted in its place, we are in a natural and unregenerate state.

I am very bold to detail my opinions in this dictatorial manner. Forgive me, and do not mistake my meaning. I am not arrogant enough to suppose that I can teach and convince. Alas ! while I write I feel as if I were only a Christian in theory. I sometimes fancy that I can really say "thy will be done," but I soon feel all the impatience and depression of protracted anxiety, and am weary and heart-sick of my scramble through the world.

Forgive me if I have said any thing offensive ; and may He, before whom the wisdom of the world is foolishness, direct us both in our researches into his word ! May He, who alone is able, enlighten our minds by his Holy Spirit, to see the great work that is set before us ! And, whatever difference of opinion we as fallible creatures may have, may we both meet in that blessed house not made with hands, where the weary shall find rest !

Ever yours.

LETTER X.

TO MISS T. G.—

My dear Friend,

I am glad that you complain of my long silence, and yet perhaps, when you have read this letter, you will wish it had been continued a little longer. Perhaps you have heard from Mr. T—— that I am again involved in anxiety. In my last situation I would not stay, in this I would, but may not. My dear Mrs. R——, with her accustomed kindness, will not admit that the circumstances are at all mortifying to me. “Mrs. F——,” she says, “wants a person who can make sweet music for the children in the absence of their master; you cannot it seems, but if this be a crime, Heaven forgive my sinful fingers, that never played a note of music in the whole course of their existence.”

Half my regret in this business is for Mr. O——, who placed me here with such sanguine hopes of success. My dear Emily too, who never for one moment admitted the idea of my being incompetent, is sadly grieved. How full of joy this dear girl was at my coming into the neighbourhood! It is well that we have not second sight.—Her brother, who is just married, is now staying with a friend in this place. He has been always an idol here, and he deserves to be one every where. His talents command the respect, and his excellence of character insures the esteem, of every one. Oh! how my heart danced for joy at the sight of him and his bride, and Emily, who all dined here the other day! With his

usual consideration, Mr. K—— treated me with even more than his accustomed kindness. He took an opportunity to speak to Mrs. F—— on the notice she had given me. He said, if he had daughters, he knew no one to whose care he should so willingly confide them as to mine, and he expressed his surprise at their decision. They have the highest opinion of his judgment, and so have I; but he is wrong on this point, and Mrs. F—— is right. I am *not* the character that is required in this family. They should have, not only a highly accomplished governess, but one who has had experience enough to give confidence and authority to her manners.

Well, I was going to tell you, that when these dear friends went away, they begged that I might return with them for a few days, as they had not seen me before for some time. Oh, what delightful days I spent at their dear happy home! How I love the dear mother who welcomed me so tenderly, as the friend of the son and daughter of whom she has so much reason to be proud! I spent an age of happiness. All the cares and sorrows of my heart were locked up, or only produced to be laughed at.

I was very glad to have an opportunity of correcting a mistake which Mr. K—— had made about me. He seriously believed that I cherished a very warm affection, or (to use the common silly phrase) was fallen in love with Mr. B. F——, *because* I freely expressed my admiration of some parts of his conduct that have come under my observation. There are some actions of his that I admire infinitely more, but I am not at liberty to make them known. In

the meantime, how very little does Mr. K—— understand me in this respect, to suppose me such a baby as to betray myself ! I say of Mr. B. F—— just what I think ; and I praise him, because I think such persons deserve praise ; but if I really felt towards him as he thinks I do, his name would never pass my lips.

The character of this same gentleman has cost me some trouble to decipher ; but if I *could* stoop to love a man who does not care a straw for me, or to love before I was asked, *he* would not be the man. I should just as soon think of loving a Greek Lexicon. I had some trouble to convince Mr. K—— of this ; and you believed so too, he said, shame on you for it ! I declare I can scarcely believe that you can have so contemptible an opinion of me ; yet I remember that I have seen you smile, and look very wise, when I spoke of him ; but I never supposed that you or any one could think *me* indelicate enough to talk of the man I loved. Pray undeceive your dear mother, if she thinks with you on this point ; but I am sure she does not ; *she* knows the female heart better. I am very much affronted you see, and I desire you will write a long letter soon, and then perhaps you may be forgiven.

Yours, &c.

LETTER XI.

TO MISS T. G——

My dear Friend,

Your letter was the first notice which I received of the marriage of our friends. I was very much interested by your account of the ceremony. It was all just as it should be; and yet, do you know, I cannot but wonder at the perfect composure of the parties on this occasion. To say nothing of the serious importance of the thing itself, was it not a separation from all the ties that have bound the heart? and besides, as Tom Thumb says, "it was a day they never saw before."

And so you do not agree with me in opinion, on the man who has disturbed the little sad tranquillity that my poor sisters were in! I do not often dispute your judgment; but in this case I will venture to maintain my own opinion. You mistake me when you say that I object to the proofs he gives of his affection; I only doubt their sincerity. I think he has been guided by passion instead of principle; and I should have thought better of him, if he had denied himself so far as to conceal his love, till he had been well assured that there would have arisen no obstacle on the part of his family. Neither do I credit him when he affects to have had no doubt of his father's consent. Who ever heard of a very passionate avaricious old man being convinced that it was expedient for his son to marry a very young and portionless girl! How could he hope; and how

could he seek to involve the object of his affection in such misery? No; if he loved her as she deserves to be loved, he would seek her happiness before his own, and he would be doubly cautious and delicate in consideration of her unprotected state. Instead of that, as soon as he had received an angry refusal from his father, he forced himself into her presence, and entreated her to engage herself to him notwithstanding. How I long to fold my dear Sophy to my heart for her firm and delicate behaviour on this occasion! In one so very young, such dignified self-respect could hardly have been expected. "I am sure I said truly," she writes, "when I told him that I would never enter his, or any other family, in which I was not received by every member of it as a welcome addition."

You mistake me when you fancy that I blame him for imagining, that, if his father *saw* the object of his affection, he would forthwith yield to his wishes. I only wonder and smile at his folly. On the whole I look upon the thing as that sort of fit-love which does not last long.

I am sitting up here writing to you, when I might perhaps be better entertained, if I were in the humour to be so, by joining the company below. There is a party here to-day, but I excused myself from joining it. I want spirits for strangers, and these are all gentlemen. And yet, tell it not in the marketplace, I like the conversation of men better than that of women. I like to sit and listen, without taking any part myself in what is going on, and one can do this better with men than with women. Besides, men do

not so much ask what you know, as what you are ; and then they are so conveniently blind to all faults in our sex but those of pedantry and dogmatism ; and they fancy themselves so quicksighted in judging of character ; and it is so amusing to see how easily they are deceived ! But I have some other occupation than that of finding out their mistakes.

I will attend to your wishes about Miss M——. I see very little of her, but what I do see, I like. She appeared to me very agreeable ; and the absence of all pretension was sufficient to prepossess me in her favour. She spoke to me without reserve, and she seemed perfectly to understand the present state of things. “ Pretension is the order of the day,” she said, “ and those who cannot make any, must not expect to succeed.” I am sure she is right. I need only look at that odious Miss L—— to be convinced of it. She is all pretension ; and see how she succeeds in establishing her own importance ! I see more of her than of any body I think. I believe it is Burns who complains somewhere that if he happens to like a few persons they are scattered all over the world directly ; whereas if there be a miscreant that he hates heartily, he is sure to be pushed against him in one way or other all through life. I hope I shall not be pushed against Miss L—— all through life. I could hardly help smiling the other day when Mrs. T——, in pure kindness, invited her here to bear me company in their absence. I found it quite impossible to convince her that I had much rather be alone. She

told me I might derive so much benefit from the society of such a person, and so on.

Well, I thought I would try to extract some good from her, as a sort of reward for the penance I was doomed to undergo in her society the whole day long. I thought she might perhaps be able to give me some hints on the best means of managing children: I would not learn her art of managing their parents if I could; and yet that I believe is the secret of her success. I tried in vain. She really can do nothing but talk; and all her talk is about herself, and her plans, and what people have said of them, and how wonderfully she had succeeded wherever she had been, and how anxious all parents were to have her. I sat silently wondering that she should think it worth while to pretend even before me, but long habit has made it her nature. What a labour and toil it must have been to her at first to *make believe* all the day long! It is well for her that the parents of her pupils are more easily induced to believe in the wonderful merits that she lays claim to than I am. Education with her consists in learning a certain number of lessons and languages. I said something of the cultivation of the mind and the improvement of the character, but she gave me to understand that a governess had nothing to do with these. I said, I had thought they were of the first consequence. "Oh, certainly;" but she assured me, and perhaps too truly, that parents always enquired more particularly about what accomplishments you could teach their children, than what principles you would implant in them.

She spoke of the wonders she had wrought with her late pupils. I never knew them before she had their management, but certainly, if she is to answer for the formation of their characters; she has a heavy load of sin to bear. The eldest I consider a very fair specimen of the evil of such a plan as hers. She is more forward in acquired knowledge than any girl I ever knew; but look at her general habits, and you will soon see that her mental powers have been excited beyond their natural strength. The brain has been unduly called into action, and its powers are developed at the expense of all the energies of her age and character.

If I were a parent, I should have a great horror of these hot-bed plants. I never saw any good from them in after life. I do not know that this precocity has any happy effect upon the character, and the formation of that should be the grand aim. On the contrary, the *display* of it can hardly fail to be very prejudicial. Next to the inculcation of principle, I have always laboured more to produce a taste for literature, and a capability of application to any pursuit, than to fill the heads of my pupils with the mere technical routine of school-business. In short, to enable a pupil to know herself, to furnish her with the means of finding herself out, appears to me a most important thing in education. But why do I spend my time in qualifying you, who are so happily spared from all trials of this kind? I only meant to observe that my ideas of education are entirely at variance with the system pursued in this neighbourhood:—

and yet, Mrs. T—— is quite right in her judgment about me : I am not the person required in this family.

Yours truly.

LETTER XII.

TO MISS T. G——

My dear Friend

Nothing is yet decided about myself, but it soon will. I could almost laugh at the whimsicality of my present situation. So many people are asked to have me ! Shall I be rejected by all of them I wonder ? About a week since, Mrs. T—— told me that I might expect a visit from Mrs. V——, who wished to engage me. The next day I was summoned to M—— House to meet the lady. She was not arrived, and I returned home, feeling as I suppose people do when they have been reprieved from hanging. I would do any thing in the world to be sure of some shelter, and yet I was breathless with apprehension when I thought of this interview. I had just composed myself with the certainty of being safe at least for that day, when a summons came for me to face the lady.

She has an eye which any one might quail before. It seemed to comprehend me in one glance ; and yet I was much more composed than I expected to be on the occasion. She requested me to walk into the breakfast room, and she led the way. I followed her rapid movements with leaden steps. She opened the

business by telling me that she was in some degree fettered by another engagement, but she thought the young person in question would not answer her purpose as well as I should. She hastily ran over her written proposals, in which there was nothing unusual, with the exception of not being admitted to the parlour when there was company. To this I made no objection, indeed I did not feel disposed to make any; unless you are perfectly at your ease, there can be no enjoyment of society. I observed that she had marked my salary at a higher price than I had named. She said in her usual quick way, "Oh, it is what we have been accustomed to give, and I am sure it is not at all too much. I taught the children myself for a little time, and I know the plague of it."

She settled that by next Thursday we were both to have made up our minds. She lamented my ignorance of music, "Mr. V—— was so very particular about it, for herself she thought it a great deal of time wasted." After this I was not surprised to hear that she was an admirable player. She "hoped I was good-tempered, healthy, not disposed to take offence at trifles, and easy in my disposition," but she did not desire me to walk about that she might see my paces, which I almost expected.

I staid to tea. There were many young persons present about my own age, but oh, how differently were they situated! I marked them as they formed themselves into groups at the piano, or into little conversation parties, and wondered if they were ever unhappy. I suppose they do contrive to mingle some

bitters in their flowing cup ; but with parents, and homes of their own, what can they have to disturb their peace ? And then I thought of my fate, and of the struggle that I was called to make for a subsistence, and I was very sad. But I came home feeling it a great relief that this dreaded interview was over. I have now to see Mr. S—— and hear his proposals, but I do not dread this half so much. Men are better to deal with than women in these matters. Strange to say, they have more delicacy ; and besides, he is a religious character, and I fear nothing from such persons.

I saw Miss D—— yesterday. How could I ever be so dull as to prefer her sister for a moment ! She was speaking to me on my present perplexities. Mrs. T—— said very kindly, “all that Miss C—— wants is, to know how to communicate the knowledge she possesses.” I said I should prefer a school, because there was so much less responsibility. Miss D—— observed that, “in a school they were so apt to impose all the burden upon a new comer, and make the situation very irksome.” “That I should not mind,” I said, “if I could do my duty, and give satisfaction ; I am prepared to bear all that.” I suppose I spoke with earnestness, for when I expected some reply she was silent, and on looking up in her face, I saw her benign countenance beaming like an angel of pity. Tears stood in her eyes. I could have fallen at her feet and kissed them. She continued silent ; I dared not trust myself to speak again ; and she soon took her leave. The softened tone of

her voice went to my heart, and seemed to heal its cares. The compassion and kindness that spring only from principle I ought to value, and I hope I do; but I can always receive them with great composure, and indeed would much rather not be the selected object on which such virtues are exercised: but the sympathy which springs from feeling, from the heart ere its best impulses have been chilled by the world, speaks home to my bosom, and takes from me all reserve and self-command. I can no longer bid my heart be still; it is all open to meet and welcome the hallowed tear.

I have just been reading "The Man of Feeling" and "The Man of the World." I wonder that I never met with them before. I read the first with great pleasure; I cannot say the same of the other. The Man of the World is too horrible in its details to afford, me at least, any pleasure in the perusal. If such a character as Sir Thomas Sindall ever did exist, it is not natural now. Such systematic villany is quite out of date. The Lovelaces and Sindalls belong to another age. What is the cause of this? Surely it is a favourable symptom of our moral taste, and of the present order of things.

I will write again soon. Ever yours.

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LETTER XIII.

TO MISS T.:G—

My dear Friend,

I am sure I have been a great trouble to you for some time past ; it is but just therefore that you should know that my fate is fixed for the present. Every body who knows me at all, seems to know more about my affairs than I do myself, so perhaps you already know that it is settled for me to go to D——. I hope I am thankful for this *certain* prospect of a shelter, and yet my heart is heavy. You may justly accuse me of being ungrateful and inconsistent, to feel so sad when the thing that I wished for is granted ; but the excitement of the trial is over, and there seems no further call for exertion, and that, I suppose, is the cause why I sink now.

You heard that I was to decide on Thursday. Well, I went over to dinner. This going *to be looked at* is more dreadful than any thing you can imagine. I was mighty philosophic all the way ; I asked myself why I should be afraid of Mrs. V—— ; and what should make one human being afraid of another ; “ what makes the mighty differ ? ” All my reasonings fell to the ground the moment the coach stopped at the door. I felt as if I could have hid myself in the grave ; but, however, I was very composed and quiet to all outward appearance, and went through my ordeal pretty well. The visit which I had previously had from Mr. S—— had done me good. His kindness had encouraged me to hope that I

might succeed with others as well as I had done with him.

You will want to hear something of the heads of the house. You can already form some idea of the lady. The appearance of the gentleman fully justified the character I had previously heard of him. He appears habitually silent, and very nervous and timid, but his ill health may have produced all this. Every mild and gentle feeling beams forth in his eye, and his other features are only expressive of the quiet indolence of his nature. In *her* countenance there is certainly no repose. I said so at the first glance; and in the course of the evening I perused her leisurely, and confirmed my first impression. I ate my dinner with the comfortable assurance of being under the *surveillance* of them both. The children are very lovely, and what is better very orderly. After dinner they came in, ranged themselves in a phalanx opposite to me, and surveyed me with the curiosity which was natural to their age and my situation. In the course of the evening, the eldest whispered a hope to their mamma that I would come and teach them.

Mrs. V—— informed me that she could not receive me just at present, but she added, “of course my salary would commence from the time of my quitting this house, and not from the time of my coming to them.” Generosity of feeling, and liberality in action appear to be very prominent features of her character. She asked me no more questions, and I only fear that she gives me credit for being more than I am.

She is highly accomplished herself, but she seems to set no value upon her accomplishments, nor, as far as I can learn, to make any use of them.

I have not told you about Mr. S——. The day before I went to D—— he came. I was most agreeably surprised in him. The poor man had to introduce himself; and pitying the awkwardness of his situation as I came down to see him, I forgot my own embarrassment in my desire to relieve his. He is the kind of person who puts you directly at your ease. To *you* a may be permitted to say that I felt secure of pleasing him. There is evidently no pretension in his character; you see in a moment that he is one of the very few who are content to let themselves alone. Even his look at me was not one of enquiry or scrutiny. It seemed rather to say "can I show you any kindness? can I do any thing for you?" It is easy to see that he has a very tender heart: it seemed to overflow when he spoke of his wife and children. He said he had no fear of my pleasing them; he could not be deceived in me; but I deserved a higher situation than he had it in his power to offer me. He very frankly told me his circumstances, and what he could afford to give, and what sort of society I should be in. He wished his children to have the advantages of education, but he added, "I would rather you should make them good and useful women, teach them to feel for others and be thankful for themselves, than give them all the accomplishments in the world." He said many more things that pleased me, told me every thing likely to

be an objection, and then said, "I have told you all the disagreeables that I know of, belonging to us, and I leave you to decide." He treated me with a respect, and even delicacy, that revived my spirits, and did me more good than I can describe. At parting he shook hands with me, and again expressed very warmly the interest which he felt for me. He could not help wishing that I might come to them. If I decided to go to Mrs. V——, and, after a year, did not remain, he hoped I would give them the first offer. They had not intended to have a governess for the present year, but this they would waive if I would go to them now. I think I should have so decided, and I fear that I have cast away my comfort; but Miss F—— says that his wife is certainly in a consumption, and in this case I might be unsettled again.

I have just finished "Self-control." I like it very much upon the whole, but I must think the incidents are improbable, especially in the last volume. Is it not a great fault too that the self-controlling, Christian Laura should contemplate suicide, even in the dreadful alternative which she expected? Can any circumstances arise which may justify such a crime in a Christian? Surely the author has greatly erred in this point.

Believe me, &c.

LETTER XIV.

TO THE REV. E. T. V.—

My dear Friend,

I am very glad that you have taken the trouble to set me right. Surely it is always worth while to correct an error in any one. You need not fear that your remarks are unnecessary ; I need to be *instructed* as well as *reminded* on many points in which I dare say you would be surprised at my ignorance. I now see clearly the distinction which you point out. I fully understand that we must look at human conduct as it respects God as well as man, and this places the thing in a very different light.

With respect to my dear and valued friend Miss G——, I think you are not qualified to do her character justice. You are too well satisfied to rest on the surface, to be a very good judge of female character. May I be permitted to say, that I have observed this disposition in you before ? You are too easily disgusted with *manner* ; and, on the other hand, you are disposed to overlook real deficiencies, if they are only covered with the varnish of polished society. In Miss G—— you saw a great deal of timidity, and a certain degree of embarrassment or want of self-possession, which is not agreeable either to see or feel ; but then they are accompanied in her with so much sterling worth, that you really ought to have taken the trouble to find her out. She is remarkably well-informed ; and having no talent for frivolous conversation, she is apt, when in company with clever men, to make enquiries of them, and bring forward subjects

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of discussion, which may perhaps give her an air of pedantry, and above all it may give her a tinge of *deep blue*.

Well, she is prepared I believe for this terrible imputation, and ready to brave all its consequent horrors. She has deliberately chosen a life of single blessedness, from what cause I do not exactly know, but I do know that she has had opportunities of changing her condition, which have been without any hesitation rejected. Her only motive for asking you questions was a real desire for information; and if your mind had not been painfully occupied, I cannot think that you would have found them annoying. Perhaps she is sometimes so intent upon improvement that she forgets to be agreeable; but then there is so much excellence about her that it only seems like a speck in the sun. I confess that I did not at first discover the warmth of her heart under the coldness of her manner; but I believe her conduct to me, in the first stage of our intimacy, was under the influence of her principles rather than her feelings. She is always the friend of the oppressed; she saw me under very trying circumstances, and she came forward to my assistance; and then, without any effort on my part, her sympathy and kindness grew into friendship and affection. I never should have known half that she had done for me, if Miss K—— had not told me a few months ago; and I could not help shedding tears at the recital of her active benevolence for one who had no claim upon her. She is a living proof that it is not necessary to have suffered affliction oneself in order to care for others. Her life seems to

have been exempt from sorrow, and yet how tenderly alive she is to human suffering !

You are surprised at my taste for Ossian. I scarcely know whether I possess it now. I certainly fancied that I had great pleasure in some parts of the poems, so much so, that I have waded through all the dissertations on their authenticity, with such a pre-determination in their favour, that if M'Pherson himself had come to tell me that he wrote them, I should not have believed him.

I am just now delighted with Miss Smith's " Song from Afar." How well she must translate ! for I do not like her own poetry at all.

I do assure you I have done all that was possible to persuade our dear friend to break off her engagement with B——, but I cannot prevail. Only last week I took an opportunity of writing at large on " Boys' Courtship." The only answer I got was an enquiry if I happened to remember a certain prim young lady at G——, who was graciously pleased to instruct that very handsome boy N—— how to be graceful and attentive to young ladies ? It is very true I did that young gentleman some good ; and I wish her intimacy with B—— was of the same kind. It always does a boy of that age good to have an animating principle, and especially when he is such a heavy, indolent creature as N—— was. It was quite necessary for him to try to please somebody, and I was perfectly aware that the sort of liking which he felt would never do him any harm ; and then, he was afraid of me ; in short there is no point of comparison between the two cases. I look back on those days with a kind of sur-

prise at my present gravity, which seems so unnatural to my age, but it is more natural to my situation than the gaiety which I then occasionally felt.

I trust and pray that something may occur to break off this engagement, for I can foresee nothing but misery if it is carried into effect. The disparity of age is the least objection in my eyes, still it is an objection. She fancies it will make him more ready to yield to her judgment, which is so very superior to his own that it would be well for him to submit to her guidance, but I have never yet seen a weak or foolish man who would be managed. Such men are always wilful and headstrong. It is only a man of sense who will be convinced by reason, and he will at the same time keep in mind, that he is a creature bearing authority, and only respectable as long as he keeps his place.

You are astonished and provoked that a young woman of such attractions should be caught by fine teeth and fine eyes, but you forget that a fine fortune is added. This must, and ought, to have its due weight. There are other things also to be considered. On her side, the first *fratcheur de la jeunesse* is over; and then, that long engagement which eat out all the heart of her youthful days, and at last ended so unhappily; in short, there is a great deal to be said in excuse for her. I have looked in vain for some redeeming qualities in him; I can see none. I can find nothing but selfishness, disguised in many shapes, but still essentially the same.

Believe me, &c.

LETTER XV.

TO MISS T. G——.

My dear Friend,

I thank you for the books. *Les Chevaliers du Cygne* is a very amusing work. *Mad. de Genlis* seldom fails to interest me. I wonder if she is really so worthless in her own character as some people represent her. I once knew a very respectable old Frenchman who had known her in his youth, and he never spoke of her without a shrug of horror. I can hardly believe her so guilty as he thought her, yet I think one can easily discover that sincerity is not the pearl of great price in her eyes. Her best heroines never hesitate to sacrifice the truth to their convenience or inclination; and my favourite Olivier denies all knowledge of *Celanire*, only that he may be gratified by hearing her described by *Ordalie*. On another occasion too she makes the parties violate the most solemn oaths without the least shadow of a scruple. Their sorrow is only for the consequences.

You have desired to hear my opinion of the books I read, so you see you have encouraged me to criticise, and to read a book more to find out its faults than its beauties, a disposition which I dread more than any other. *Mad. de Genlis* would perhaps say to me, "*Je n'ai pas entrepris de plaire à tous les sots;*" and, when I hear the cavilling criticisms of many young men and women in the present day, I am very much inclined to agree with her. In all such cases I am led to ask, whether it is not the fault of

their education which has closed their senses to all that is beautiful in nature, and in imagination, and only opened them to whatever is perverse, and crooked, and unseemly.

I have however some legitimate quarrel with Mad. de Genlis, for taking more pains in drawing the character of Armoffède than any other. She is merely a monster of her own creation, and she may perhaps therefore be allowed to delight herself in her own imagination, but Shakspeare's Caliban is not such a disgusting wretch as Armoffède. There never certainly was any thing like her in nature. But enough, and too much, of such a libel on our sex. All Mad. de Genlis' heroines fail in delicacy. She makes them soft, and amiable, and fascinating; but she cannot draw a delicate, high-minded woman; at least I have never seen that she could. I am sure she has not done it in *les Chevaliers du Cygne*. Think of her making Celanire recall Olivier, and tell him that she is determined to marry him as soon as she is able to walk from her chamber! And then Beatrice offers herself to him, confesses her love without being asked, and persists in loving him and besieging him after he had refused her! There is something very unnatural and revolting in *her* courtship; neither was I very well pleased with his struggles with himself. What business had he to have any struggles? You see what you get by inviting my criticisms; it is so easy to find fault that one never knows when to have done.

I am more than half-frightened at your conversation with Miss L——. How came she to know that

Mrs. V—— desired a governess so highly accomplished? If she did she should have told me so. Not a word was said that implied any such thing. I should have taken the other situation, if I had known that so much was required in this. What shall I do? Am I always destined to undertake things which I am incapable of performing? I am half inclined, even now, to write and tell Mrs. V—— all that I know of my incapacities and deficiencies. I did not willingly deceive her, if I have done it. I am aware that there is something about me which gives people a higher idea of my qualifications than they merit. I do from the bottom of my heart lament this, for I see no good in being able to impose upon people. It is a talent which I possess in common with Miss L——. There is only this difference; she does it from design, and I never advance a syllable for the purpose.

Your friend Mr. T—— dines here to-day. He is an excellent creature, but it would take a long time for me to converse pleasantly with him. He thinks too much before he speaks, and I perhaps think too little.

I found last night from the newspaper that I had sustained a loss in my number of friends. Did you ever hear me speak of an aged clergyman who had been my father's tutor, and during the whole of his after life his friend and counsellor? He was above ninety. My regret for his death was purely selfish; but it was a name so dear, and even holy in my sight, that I could not see it registered among the dead without very painful feelings. As long

back as I can remember, he has been associated with the happiest feelings of my childhood. A visit to his peaceful home was the reward of good behaviour, and looked forward to for days and months before it took place. He loved the company of children, and he distinguished me because I was like my father. We never came away without some token of his regard and remembrance. I remember having five new guineas at one time, which I had received in different visits, and how rich and how purse-proud I was !

The weakness and imbecility of age had lost him to me ; but, five years ago, he was able to protect us by his name, and do us essential service. On one occasion, in writing respecting us he said, "they are good children and will do well, but ye must all assist them as far as may be, and a blessing will rest on ye. My feebleness will not admit of my moving from home ; but, while I live, no one shall insult the memory of my friend, by thus encroaching on the rights of these innocents, who were the delight of his life."—Such a man as this can ill be spared from this cold, selfish world. His whole life was spent in doing good, in promoting the happiness of every creature about him. His servants, his horses, his dogs, every thing was happy under the shelter of his benevolence ; and he walked about the little world of which he was the centre, looking more like an apostle than any thing in common with the rest of his fellow-creatures. He had suffered in early life from disappointment, but that which would have

soured many tempers had no such effect on his. He was the gentlest and kindest of human beings.

I have seen the governess of whom you spoke, but I had no particular conversation with her. If I *could* argue with her on religious subjects, I should have no hope. I am always hopeless with a Socinian; that doctrine always appears to me so exactly what is spoken of in Scripture, as the pride of human reason erecting itself against the humbling doctrines of the cross. Whenever I hear any one of them talk, I cannot help saying to myself, "these are the wise and prudent in their own eyes of whom our Saviour spoke, when he said that his gospel was revealed to babes in preference to them."—Still I sometimes doubt if I am right in keeping silence before such persons. I shelter myself by saying that I am incapable of argument; but may there not be a fear lest I am giving way to the class of sins, whose character is that of being ashamed to confess Christ before men? I know that we often shrink from an open avowal of our opinions, and deceive even ourselves by saying, "oh I am incapable," and so on. Sometimes the recollection of my own weak faith deters me. I detect myself looking round, and asking, when every one is happy about me, what is the reason that I am called to such a scramble through the world? And then again I recall the mercies that I have known, and I ask if it be possible for *me* ever to doubt the goodness of God in providing for his people? All I have to do is to trust him for the future; but then, that fearful future! my heart dies within me at the

thought of it; and I feel that I am indeed one "of little faith." But I have no need to make this humbling confession to you; and above all things I dread the appearance of that most nauseous thing, the affectation of humility, so I will conclude.

Ever yours.

LETTER XVI.

TO THE REV. E. T. V—.

My dear Friend,

You too are experiencing all the horrors of a new and untried scene of action. We all think too much of your present isolated state to be very gay. You suffer in being torn from all that you have been so long accustomed to see, if not to love. It is consoling to remember that you suffer in well-doing. The Providence of God has placed you where you are; and may your labours in the vineyard be owned and accepted of him! Your letter to G— arrived the day before I left it. My first impulse on reading it was to write to you directly, for we thought you in low spirits, but the *vanity* of anxious friendship was checked, and since I have been here, with four pupils on my hands, my time has been too much occupied to admit of its rising again. I have contented myself with fervent supplications to Him who will never leave nor forsake us, that he would make you as happy as is consistent with your eternal welfare. I have given myself up entirely to my duties ever since I have been here, and have not

allowed myself even the indulgence of writing, except where I could not be excused. I am trying to be that thing, whose "duties walk their constant round, nor make a pause, nor find a void;" and I am thankful that sometimes at the close of day I can say, "my Father! I have done thy will, and I have done it *cheerfully* because it *is* thy will; I have walked my course alone, uncheered by any eye that loved me, unaided by any help but thine, which I feel to be all-sufficient."

I cannot positively tell you whether I succeed in pleasing those who employ me, but at present there is nothing alarming in the manner of Mrs. V——. For myself, I came determined to be content with all things; however it is but justice to say that Mrs. V——'s conduct to me has been perfectly lady-like and proper: of course she expects me to do my duty to her children, and I can see that she would not easily tolerate a neglect of it; but the duties she exacts are only such as every rational mother would require. I never before saw a woman so active and watchful; she is every where, and sees and hears every thing. Every night I hear her in the school-room, examining every book and every slate, and several times she has encouraged me by expressing her satisfaction. The children have all long ago had habits of order and regularity implanted in them. It is as natural for them to put a thing in its right place, as it was for the little T——s to leave it on the floor. Their mother praises all of us for keeping so neat a school-room, and seems to wish to re-assure my

spirits, but I yet tremble before her steadfast eye; and she never looks grave in my presence that I do not fancy she is determining the manner of my dismissal.

The children, the servants, every thing in the house, move in perfect submission to her will; even the baby is silenced by a look, and yet I have never seen his mother practise any undue severity. Every body seems to know that her will is fate. I am trying to fathom the secret of her irresistibility; if I should succeed, I think I shall arrange my thoughts for publication, and present the world with a new system of education. It is a subject on which old maids find themselves particularly qualified to hold forth. All the treatises that I have seen upon education have been written by them. Mrs. V—— is one of the most accomplished women I ever knew, but she seems to set no value upon her acquirements, nor does she ever seem to use them as resources to herself. This is strange; but then she manages to keep up such an eternal round of visits and visitors, that her time passes without need of internal resources. Alas for me! she never opens a book, and has no literary taste whatever. The whole world of literature is to both Mr. and Mrs. V—— a dead letter. He has a study which is never unlocked, and never entered by any one but himself. I am in a most wretched state of mental starvation. For the first few days I explored every room in the house, as far as I felt in my own bounds, in hopes of finding books, but no signs of them could I see, except what were contained in a

small ornamental bookcase in the drawing-room. Mrs. V—— observed me looking over it with great eagerness, and said with her usual politeness that all the books there were very much at my service. I thanked her. The shelf contained the History of England, Murray's Grammar, Meditations for the Aged, and Blair's Sermons ! A newspaper three times a week is the only thing in the form of reading that I see.

I have endeavoured to give you the outline of Mrs. V——; you will not require me to throw in the shading. I contemplate her irascible countenance as the index of my future fate. I observe the prompt decision of her character and tremble ; but I have no wish to have over me an irresolute, dawdling, half-formed character. That gentle tameness of manner which proceeds from dulness of feeling and stupidity, with all the pretty sillinesses attendant on it, may be very delightful to *men*, but I have no wish to yawn over it in close contact. It is, I humbly conceive, widely different from the animated mildness of intellectual benevolence, from the intelligent sympathy of a mind tenderly alive to the joys and sorrows of others, and spreading the mild radiance of *active* kindness on every one within its influence. The picture is in my mind's eye, shining in all the lustre of sweet and never failing tenderness.

Yours, &c.

LETTER XVII.

TO MRS. A——.

My dear Friend,

I really do not know how my friends like my letters, but this I know, that I could scarcely live if I did not speak in this way to them. Only imagine my way of life; a stranger to the grown up people of the house, just on the same distant terms with them that I was the first day of my coming. I never meet them but at supper, when I am summoned from my solitary chamber, and partake of that meal with Mr. and Mrs. V——. It is well for me that I love the society of children, and these children are remarkably orderly and agreeable in their manners. The eldest boy is too old to submit to the management of a woman; he will soon be taken off my hands, and on some accounts I shall not be sorry, though I shall very much miss his gentlemanly conduct, and his conversation too will be a loss. He sometimes makes me laugh. There is a great deal of humour in his character, and when he is a man I think he will be a very agreeable one. The other day I happened to find a passage in one of the school books, which I thought applied to him, and might possibly correct a habit for which I had reproved him, I read it aloud, and looked up to see the effect, when my gravity was nearly upset by his nodding his head, and saying, “very good girl, she reads very well, so she does.” He requires the management of a tutor. With the rest of the children I have no difficulty.

As soon as school is over, they go down into the garden, or ride out in the carriage. They never walk beyond the garden, which is not large, neither is it pretty, being nothing more than a grass field with a gravel walk round it. Mr. and Mrs. V—— have no taste for laying out their grounds, and in the formation of this garden they only consulted the health of the children.

Here I walk a little every day, or I sit in my chair of state ; I sometimes see gay company, morning visitors, or dinner company, walking below ; I hear them talk and laugh, but I feel no wish to join them ; I seem as if I had “ said of laughter it is folly, and of mirth what doeth it ? ” I remain still, studying my book of arithmetic ; I occasionally soar a little higher in my studies and,

“ Hope in little time to know

“ Whether the moon’s a cheese or no.”

I close my books sometimes, and cannot help sighing for a little society, but I seem completely shut out. One lady who visits here took the trouble to notice me, but I found she wished to make me speak of the family in confidence to her. This I hold myself bound in honour not to do. I scarcely know if I am justified in doing it to my nearest friends. There are very few to whom I “ unfold the secrets of the prison-house,” but what should I do without those chosen few ?

Mr. V—— is an excellent man. The more I see of him the more I am convinced of this, but with all his excellence there is a want of ease about his manner, a nervous timidity, which seems to throw a veil

over his real character ; and with all the disposition in the world to be kind and attentive, a conversation with him is rather fatiguing than agreeable. I believe his kindness and exertions for the poor are boundless. The other night Mrs. V——, in speaking of some measure that had been suggested, observed, that it was a thing so very disagreeable and troublesome that it was more than could be expected of any one. Mr. V—— changed the subject, and a gentleman near her said in a low voice, “ Mr. V—— has done it.”

Our dear Emily you perhaps know is at G——. I have received one hurried letter from her, which, like all things done in a hurry, was any thing but satisfactory. She assures me of her brother's increased affection and interest for me. I am afraid I must set this down for her poetry, for I know nothing that I have done lately to cause an increase. I think I am become more indifferent to the opinion of others than I used to be. I hope I feel more truly with the apostle, that “ with me it is a small thing to be judged of man's judgment.” I would lay my faults with all their aggravations on their head before Him whose sweetest attribute is pitying mercy ; and I think I can be content to be severely judged of men ; if He to whom all hearts are open will acquit me of allowing myself the exercise of habitual sin, and bless my endeavours to turn with more devotedness to him.

What do you think Mr. K—— proposes that I should do ? Write a book ! I am thankful that I

can so far estimate my own powers as to feel nothing but wonder at his mistake. If I were really able, I think the great horror that I have of appearing in public would be quite sufficient to deter me.

When I was at G—— I saw the lady who was the first love of our friend Mr. K——, the Mrs. X—— whom all the men admire, and who in her turn admires all the men. I quote her own words. She is not pretty, but she is as free from talent, taste, or imagination, as he, or any other man, can desire. I admire the placidity of her temper, but a more systematic course of impropriety I never witnessed, and that, not springing from the levity of the moment, or occasioned by an unusual flow of spirits, but simply from a nature uncontrolled by any principle of duty to God or man. That a woman received in society, a wife, on the eve of becoming a mother, should ridicule and despise her husband, and openly court the attentions of every body else, and profess the pleasure she received from flirting with every boy that came in her way, is perfectly inconceivable to a mind at all accustomed to the decencies of life. I could not help lamenting that a softness of manner should make us so far tolerate vicious habits.

You have heard of the happy termination of the loves of K. and N——. It is impossible for you to imagine all the difficulties we had to overcome before the concluding chapter. Never since the days of Harriet Byron was there such a *concatenation* of events. When it was all over, and the wedding-day was fixed, he came down to spend the evening with

us. He spoke but little, he only looked full of ineffable delight. Certainly I had very much mistaken his character; I had judged of him in a time of internal irritability and misery. There never was a more devoted lover. I spoke of him with admiration, Emily said with envy; I certainly did covet him for *her*. How much better he is fitted for her than the one she seems fated to have! Poor B——! what halcyon days they were to me, when he was away, either sulking in his own room, or flirting somewhere else! I had sometimes the honour of being deputed to carry messages or notes for him, when he wished for a cessation of hostilities. If he had but known what a wolf in sheep's clothing I was! He did know the opinion and advice I gave, and bore it very well. I suppose he knew that people never take advice in such matters.

Cousin S—— plagued us to the end. He is deteriorating every day; he loves his little wife, and 'tis an easy thing to his sluggish mind to come down to her level, and there he rests, for he has not vigour of intellect enough to go on by himself. He has some redeeming qualities. He really exerted himself to mitigate the sufferings of a poor woman at G——. His *feelings* would not allow him to witness the wretchedness of a dying bed himself, but he was kind in administering to her wants by my hand, and I believe he thought that people with my coarse nerves might be useful sometimes.

Farewell.

LETTER XVIII.

TO THE REV. E. T. V—,

After this explanation you will feel yourself at perfect liberty to give up my correspondence, and I beseech you, let no fear of wounding my feelings restrain you from doing it. I do not pretend to assert that the loss of a friend will not give me pain, but be satisfied the bitterness of this is past. Your late silence, combined with the circumstances I have detailed, prove to me the alteration of your own feelings, and I have no wish to drag on the listless intercourse of expiring friendship. My heart refuses the tribute; it will not take from pity what it seeks only from cordial esteem. Do not mistake me; do not impute this letter to any thing but the right cause—a sincere desire on my part to set you free from a correspondence which seems to have become importunate. Let no scruples prevent you—be assured that even in my mind you will stand acquitted of every thing but a change of feeling, which time and distance are always apt to produce.

Believe me, with most sincere wishes for your welfare in the most extensive sense of the word,

Ever your sincere friend.

LETTER. XIX.

TO THE REV. E. T. V—.

I am anxious to write again: you are unhappy; it may not be in my power to make you otherwise by writing, but I may assure you of my sympathy. Whenever you are grieved I am sorry, but I cannot honestly say that I was sorry to find my letter had awakened you to some pain, though I was not aware that it would do so. My feelings were not very pleasant, but I wipe them for ever from my remembrance, only as you *have* “sinned the sin that is past forgiveness,” you must be very good in future.

“I might have supposed it was only your system of procrastination!”—Might I really? A very flattering supposition! but I do not suppose any such thing. I now know “the head and front of my offending,” and I feel restored to your confidence. But let me caution you in *my wisdom* not to suffer your imagination to carry you so far away, as to believe that any human being is faultless. That you did so in my case is no reflection upon me. I never wished you to see me otherwise than I am—a fellow-mortal, subject to error and passion, whose best resolve is as “the flower that fades;” but if you believe that I permit myself the quiet indulgence of any known fault, you do me injustice.

This has been a very trying summer to me. I have not it is true, had my usual anxiety of seeking where to be, but I have tasted all the horrors of complete solitude. We never go beyond the garden,

and I have sometimes felt as if I should be afraid to go beyond its walls. The children are seldom with me except in school hours, and there is not one single human being with whom I can exchange a word like conversation. I see but very little of Mrs. V——, for she is perpetually engaged with parties, &c. I never go down but to supper, and then, unless there are visitors, no conversation passes.

You will fancy that the idea of leaving such a situation cannot be very distressing to me. You are mistaken. It is not I grant, at all pleasant, but I feel that I am useful, that I have not undertaken more than I am able to perform. *You* suffer yourself to be depressed from the want of success in your exertions; you sow the good seed, and you want to see the fruit. It may be of some service to you to contemplate another kind of misery, though not perhaps more difficult to bear, for the mind more easily resigns itself when it suffers from the immediate Providence of God, than when its misery arises from the misconduct of our fellow-creatures. Look at me then hanging trembling on the will and caprice of a human being for leave to toil and labour, for permission to “eat the bread of carefulness.” See me rejected on one side for incompetency, on the other from unforeseen events. Mrs. V—— has always expressed herself perfectly satisfied, so that I had no apprehensions. I found however that some law business in which they were engaged had gone wrong, and a few days ago Mrs. V—— informed me that she found from the unfortunate turn their affairs had taken, that they should not be able to keep a governess any lon-

ger, therefore my attendance after Christmas would not be necessary. She regretted the unpleasant state of their affairs, but spoke of the consequences to me as the simplest thing imaginable. It was mentioned in a very careless way, in a letter which she wrote to tell me when they should all return from a place where they were staying for a few days. I was not well when the letter came. The perfect solitude of the place, with no books and no society, not even the children, does not agree with my nerves, and this news, which involved me at once in all my old perplexities, completely upset me. I could not conceal the pain which I felt, when Mrs. V—— returned, and she could not at all understand why it should be any particular trouble to me; she wondered I could not command myself better, made some very comfortable reflections on the inefficacy of my religious principles, that would not bear me up under such *trifles*, and left me to myself.

I do endeavour to be cheerful, but that it is an effort, and a very painful one sometimes, I cannot deny. I know that there are very few situations where I could succeed as well as I have done here. Her authority over the children is absolute, and her management of them is very judicious.

You enquire for my beloved sister. Her health is better than usual. I think you know that she is engaged to a clergyman who is waiting for a living. I do not wish her to be married so young, but I do not reflect that her happiness depends on the fidelity of a *man*, and that it may be tried for years, without fear-

ful anxiety. Men are not, I think, in general capable of an attachment that can stand the test of time and difficulty. It is hardly a fault, so much as a quality of their nature. Their habits of life and power of choosing prevent an affection from taking deep root, and bearing the rare blossoms of truth and constancy. I sometimes hope that the kind of affection which my sister must inspire will be lasting, because she is very different from all the women who are admired in the present day. Though in our domestic circle there was always a vein of playful humour, which is, I think, very delightful, yet in the simple gravity, and energetic sweetness of her general deportment, there is not a shadow of that pretty silliness which seems so very charming to men. Whether in joy or sorrow, every word and action bears the stamp of good sense and correct judgment. I am told the gentleman is a religious man and a sincere christian. Alas! I feel no security in this. A man may destroy the peace of half a score simple women, and yet be a very good christian. I could show you more than one example of this.

Yours, &c.

LETTER XX.

TO THE REV. E. T. V—.

My dear Friend,

I gave you a holiday in my last letter which I could very ill afford. Just now I want all the consolation of all my friends. I am still uncer-

tain as to the future, and at times I am quite sick with anxiety. Yesterday I could not have believed it possible that I should have spirits to begin this letter, but I have written so many lately of a different description, that I felt as if it would be a refreshment to me to write one on which nothing would depend—in which I should not have to describe *myself*; and all my various qualifications. I do not think my mental health would sink so much, if my bodily strength were greater, but the one enfeebles the other. I believe I shall die of old age before I am thirty.

I am as yet uncertain where I shall be when I leave this house, I should be glad to have something fixed, if it pleased God. A journey to my poor mother would be attended with a very heavy expense; and when there I could not bear to be a burden upon her. She finds it very difficult to support herself, and supply my two sisters; indeed she could not do it without assistance from me: so you see I am not anxious without a cause: a great deal depends on my being able to earn something for them as well as myself. Yet I have just declined what appeared a very eligible situation, because I did not consider myself competent to its duties: indeed, in my present nervous state, I scarcely know any thing which I could conscientiously undertake; but I hope I shall be stronger; at present, the least word of real kindness entirely overcomes me.

I have had a letter from Mrs. D——, but I can bear all *her* abundant tenderness with perfect compo-

sure. She *bedaub*s me with expressions of esteem and interest which she does not feel, and which I would not give a pin for if she did.—You know her as well as I do ; and if I were at all in a humour to be amused, I could laugh at her continuing to insist upon being a patroness of mine without ever stirring one inch to serve me. The only proof she gives of her extraordinary affection is to make me pay the postage of a letter every now and then ; and if I ask her to do me any particular kindness, she talks of her husband's *peculiarities*, and of the extreme difficulty she finds in bearing with them. “ No one can know what she has to endure.” Now, every one knows that she has complete dominion over this poor man ; and, by the bye, it was the first thing that unveiled her to me. When I first knew her, I was deceived like other people by her manners ; but I afterwards discovered, that while she pretended to every one of the virtues, she was always trying to make you think ill of her husband. Now this, I take it, is as clear a proof of any woman's worthlessness as can be given. I knew that her tyranny over her husband was well known to all her house, and yet, one day when I was there she made excuses to a lady for not having made a charitable visit, alledging that Mr. D—— had such strange notions on this subject that she was compelled to give up her own wishes. I saw an uncontrollable smile lurking on the countenance of her guest, which convinced me that this poor woman with all her efforts to appear every thing that she is not, deceives nobody.

Her whole life is spent in this "unreal mockery;" while her husband, who pretends to nothing, and who never gives himself the trouble of contradicting her insinuations to his discredit, is universally esteemed. I know he would do any thing for me that he could, or that he dared; but if I ask *her*, she shuffles off, writes me a long letter of tender regrets and professions which mean nothing, and "hopes that on some future occasion she may be able to serve me." In the mean time she "trusts I shall acknowledge that she has always shown sympathy and consideration for me." This was the sum total of the letter. She would stoop to purchase the good word of any one, even of me; and yet you see she does not get it, she has only taught me how to unravel such characters; so that, whenever I hear a woman trying to shift the burden of her own faults upon the shoulders of her husband, I say—here is another Mrs. D—. "If she had a family, I should have the charge of them." Very likely, but it is quite as well for the interests of society that she has not. But, enough of her.

Let me sweeten my paper by turning to my pupils. I dread leaving them. They are certainly the best behaved children I ever knew, and I think the best disposed. I am sure I do not know whether they have it of themselves, or whether it is from their mother's management, which is certainly very judicious. Some parents are satisfied if they break their children's will, and establish their own authority. They are satisfied if they teach their children implicit obedience, and they go no further. They take no trou-

ble to implant good principles of action. They treat them as if they were only machines, to be acted upon according to *their* will and pleasure, and to yield at all times to their convenience. Now this would do very well if they were always to continue children, but they are reasonable creatures; and they are moreover very quick and accurate observers, and can soon detect a false system. I should like to know the entire history of these children, for they are completely under government, and yet there is no appearance of harshness or control. They seem perfectly at their ease in the drawing-room with the guests, and yet they are never forward or troublesome, and they obey even a look of their mother.

The other evening they entreated me to come down, and hear the Miss P——s play on the piano. I went, but it was only to witness a pretty sharp contest between these same young ladies and their mamma; she insisting upon it that they should play, and they as quietly as possible protesting that they would not. The lady's face was inflamed with rage, and she reproached them with all the time and money that had been spent on their accomplishments. It was all to no purpose. The young ladies persisted in showing, that, whatever they might have learnt, they had not learnt the duty of obedience. One of them said I thought rather ill-naturedly, "why don't the Miss V——s play?" My timid pupils shrank behind me whispering—"Oh not for the world, I dare not play;" but unluckily for them the suggestion was repeated till it reached the ears of *their* mamma. She said very calmly, "Oh I am sure

they will do any thing they can to amuse you, but they know very little of music ;” then turning round, she said, “ Where are you, my dears ? go and play that song which you have been learning.” Without a moment’s hesitation these blushing children seated themselves at the piano ; and their mamma went on with her cards, without any look of triumph, or indeed any look that could mark their obedience as an uncommon occurrence.

I should very much like to take a leaf out of her book for my future guidance. I wonder what her art is. I am sure she does not draw it from books, for I have never seen her read even the newspaper. I declare I have never seen any thing in the shape of a modern publication since I have been in the house, except “ A treatise on that very prevalent disease a scald head ;” as famished people will “ prey on garbage,” I seized it with avidity and actually read it through.

In saying this I am forgetting one delight that I have had. A lady who was staying here, asked me if I liked reading. “ There are no books here,” she said, “ but Mr. H—— has promised to lend me some, and you shall have them if you like.” The next day she came in with a volume in her hand. “ I don’t know if you are at all acquainted with *Burns, a Scotch poet* : these are his letters, a sad falling off indeed.” Then, in pity to my ignorance, she was so obliging as to give me his history, with her commentary on his genius and writings, till I almost looked to see the indignant spirit of this mighty master of the impassioned lay rise up, and cry—“ hold,

hold, enough." She was about as capable of judging Burns, as I am of writing a criticism on Euclid.

I cannot tell you half the delight I had in reading the Life of Burns : and yet there is no history so melancholy to me as his. How terrible it is to see the stormy passions of his nature carrying him away captive, uncontrolled by that principle of living faith which was alone sufficient to govern and overcome them ! How sad to trace the dim and uncertain light which his ignorance of the gospel cast upon his path ! Oh ! if he had been a christian, if the mighty powers of his warm heart and ardent nature had been enlisted in the cause of religion ; what might he not have done !—Do you remember his determining to leave off poetizing, when he took a farm and said, " Come, go to, I will be wise ?"

But what have I to do with Burns ? Yes, we are alike in one point : he had to labour for his bread, and so have I ; but with the faith that I profess, I ought to rise above the feverish anxiety which wears me out, and depend firmly on the Providence which has hitherto supported me. I am almost ready to think that my continued failures and disappointments have wearied out my friends. I have heard from Miss G——, and my dear Emily, who would I know give me comfort if she could, but just when she wrote, she was so teased and perplexed from a cause which will I fear never cease to torment her, that she only increased my anxiety by a vain attempt to hide her own. She is no longer open with me on this subject. In one *brouillerie* between them, when I was there, she begged me to give my real opinion

of B——. I hesitated, for I knew it would give her pain, but I could not sacrifice my integrity from fear of the consequences. They were just what I expected. She has avoided all confidential communication on this subject ever since.

How little do superficial observers understand Miss G—— ! I wish I could show you the letters I have lately received from her. I wish I could publish them to all the world. I should like every one to know her excellence, and it will never be found out under that veil of reserve, and hesitating diffidence. Miss F—— says, “the world is over-stocked with sweet, amiable, nothing-doing women.” Certainly Miss G—— is not one of them. I wrote to her to tell her of my trouble on Friday, the next Tuesday I received a letter so full of comfort, that I could not but look upon it as one of the helps which my heavenly Father prepares for me. She began by assuring me that she considered my removal from this place as a very happy circumstance, “but think not my dear suffering friend,” she adds, “that I do not see and feel all the gloom that surrounds you, because I would point to the faint sunbeam, &c.” In the short time that had elapsed she had applied to three sources from which she had confident hopes. To-night I have a letter of inquiry from her recommendation. Some of my friends write me kind and tender letters. She does that and more. She puts her shoulder to the wheel. Nothing, that is possible to her active, energetic spirit, is left undone.

Yours, &c.

LETTER XXI.

TO THE REV. E. T. V——.

My dear Friend,

I expected to have found my sisters with my mother, but they are both absent, and have no idea that I have taken a most horrible journey, only to bless my eyes with the sight of them and my mother again.

“One last, long look to peace and them,

“Then back to busy life again!”

I hope you are anxious to hear how I have been disposed of. I received your letter a few days before I left Mrs. V——. I was very much pleased with your translation of Petrarch. Perhaps I enjoyed it the more because I had suffered such a long fast from all poetry, and indeed reading of any kind. It was a little flower springing up in the waste, and the rude gales of the desert bore its fragrance to me. There, who says I am not poetical?—But I was going to tell you how I am at last fixed. I might have had the grace to do so before, you will perhaps say. Why I have been so long in writing you shall hear in the sequel, at present I want to get over the ground as fast as I can.

Know then I am going to D—— to a Mr. and Mrs. K——. They have two children. The father is a pious and excellent man. The mother people are silent about, and when pressed to say something they tell me that she is a terrible temper. I have had no letter from her. My correspondence has been with a

Mrs. X——, a relation of the family, a high professor of religion and a woman of excellent sense. There is something about the tone of her letters that does not altogether please me, but I will not anticipate; I may be fastidious. The eldest child is ill, so they could not receive me when I was set at liberty by Mrs. V——. I felt so completely jaded, and my spirits were so entirely depressed, that the idea of meeting even my dearest friends was hardly pleasant. I had no idea that it was possible for me ever to enjoy society again. Well, in this frame of mind I came to my dear Emily and her mother. I was to wait with them for a final answer to my negotiations. My tone of mind was never I think so low before. You may imagine how completely I felt lost to all enjoyment, when I tell you that I heard Emily talk of her brother's visit with his wife and baby, with no other feeling than a wish to escape before they came.

It was well for me that the letter I waited for was delayed. These dear friends, and the charms of their conversation, restored me to myself. The delight of finding that what *I* said could interest the people about me, restored me to my powers of talking, and I was soon astonished at my own loquacity, and like the little old woman ready to say, "can this be I?" They would not let me come away, so there I have been ever since, enjoying myself most abundantly in a complete forgetfulness of the past and the future. Oh I never can forget the delight I have enjoyed in the quiet seclusion of that dear village. Long, very long, will the remembrance of this gleam of sunshine

in my path continue to gild and adorn its barrenness. It was something to find myself still capable of receiving and giving pleasure in conversation with a man of such high intellectual superiority. "Comparisons," as Mrs. Malaprop says, "are odorous," or else I would say that in future I shall rank him above your reverend divineship in my scale of friends, for he was not afraid or ashamed to show the preference that he gave to my society : *he* had the grace to avow openly the pleasure that he found in my being at his mother's with him. But seriously, I must not let my vanity carry me too far. I may humble myself by the reflection that much must be set down to the account of his humanity and feeling. He saw how much I needed kindness, and he was not sparing of the cordial.

I have said nothing of your god-son. He is a fine, fat, fair baby, with blue eyes. His whole cast of countenance at present resembles that of his mother. He has at times a very sensible frown, and when he sleeps his lips and chin are like his father's. You will see him at a more interesting age, but you will never see any thing more interesting than his father nursing him in his present helpless state, and bending over him with intense curiosity, vainly trying to unseal the book of fate by deciphering his features.

K—— and N—— came home from their matrimonial trip whilst I was there. *He* looks very gay and bridegroomish ; *she* sits up prim, and looks more like a little old maid withering in single blessedness, than one who has had "every wish of her heart

gratified." I find it was her misery that made her so interesting to me. She is now in "sober selfish ease," and the charm is broken.

I have never told you how I came here. I will spare the detail of the journey and briefly say, that after the holidays were over at G——, not getting any answer from my mother and sisters, I determined upon running down to see what they were all about. I came and found nobody. My letters had never been forwarded from this stupid post-office, and theirs to me have been directed to Mrs. V——'s where there is nobody at home. Happily for me, the family at the parsonage were all at home, and there I found rest for the sole of my foot. My mother soon came, but my sisters, my dear sisters are still far away. How I hate money! What misery the want of it, and the superabundance of it, causes! My poor Mary is engaged in a school, and in so short a time do they begin their business that it would be folly to make her take a journey to see me. Sophy is obliged for the present to rest a little to recruit her health, so that I am expecting her, and my mother has just been instructing me to read her a lecture. The young lady's grand virtue it seems is not frugality. I suppose she has one of the most generous hearts in the world, and money she looks upon as trash which it would soil her fingers to keep. She is still engaged to the clergyman of whom I told you. He is so *reasonable* as to wish I would not let her know of my being here, because he thinks this place cold and *aguish*!

My mother thinks her very foolish to bind herself to a man who may wait ten years for a living, and by that time have changed his mind, especially as she does not think that Sophy cares much about him. She had an offer from a young tradesman in London which my mother had set her heart upon her accepting. She assures me that Sophy would not have refused him civilly, if she had not made a great fuss about it. It seems the refusal was too civil, for the gentleman renewed his offer, and Sophy tossed the letter with disdain into the fire, wondered who would offer himself next, some eminent chimney-sweeper she supposed, and gave herself so many airs that it is expedient, as it seems, that she should be scolded.

Yours, &c.

LETTER XXII.

TO THE REV. E. T. V—.

My dear Friend,

I rejoice to find that you were gratified by my last letter. I was almost afraid that I had done wrong to send you nothing but an account of pleasures which are just now out of your reach. I am always pleased with myself when I can enjoy the pleasures of another. But do not, I beseech you, fancy that you have outlived every charm, or that you are forgotten or forsaken by any one you value. We were never particularly happy that we did not mention you as the only one that was wanting to

make our party complete, and as S. C—— used to say of me, you were a theme “mournful yet pleasant to the soul.”

My little sun of happiness is near its setting. I leave this place in a few days. Certainly there is nothing in the place itself which I can regret. The inhabitants of the parsonage are the friends and companions of our infancy, but if you except them, there is not a human being in the place who has any idea of enjoyment beyond that of a good dinner. Yet I have mixed among them, and they all say what excellent spirits I have. Ah! it is very easy, in the presence of beloved objects, to play my part with every appearance of being pleased with my fellow-actors; but alone, when no one smiles support, with “none who bless me, none whom I can bless,” I cannot be any thing but a cold, uninteresting, stupid sort of body. Yet I think it is good for me not to be always with my family. Those faults, which I have found out in the world, lie concealed here, and I should never *know myself* perhaps, if I were to be cherished always as I am now.

How delightful it is for every thing that one says to be right and proper! My sillinesses are wit, and all my nonsense is wisdom. My dear Sophy will not lend herself, as I *can* do, to the enjoyments of the people about us. She cannot overcome her disgust at their vulgarity. I have been very happy among them, and I should have been much more so, if they would but have let us alone, but every one is so bent upon being *sociable* that they have quite teased us with

civilities. I have a general aversion to what is called a good neighbourhood, but in such a place as this it is quite intolerable. All the people are in trade, and they meet together without any regard to rank or degrees of gentility. They all meet frequently, not to talk but to eat. It is not at all uncommon to see a roast leg of mutton with its appendages of greens and potatoes at supper; and the only subject that you hear discussed is the price of corn and the probability of its rise or fall, varied sometimes with pathetic histories of some neighbour's disorder amongst his pigs and poultry. As to politics, a newspaper I think never reaches the place, so that I am in a most interesting state of ignorance about every thing beyond the precincts of this little town. There is but one person in the place that I hear speak with any interest, and that is a poor boy who is disordered in his intellects by fits. He loves his flowers and his bees, and when he talks to me of them, he sometimes shows those simple touches of nature and feeling which I delight to see. Sophy says I have no talent for refusal. I could not bear to mortify these honest people by refusing to mix among them, and yet after all my *condescension*, after all the midnight orgies that I have celebrated, all the murdered evenings that I have sacrificed, I find they still think us proud. I am thankful that I can *go away*, and that without any pain from leave-taking. I can part even from the family at the parsonage with very little pain. Yet they were the associates of my happy infant years, and I loved them *then* with all the extravagance that I was capable of before the world sobered me; but

time has stolen the colour from my love, and all the bright and glowing tints of youthful fancy fade before the eye of sober judgment ; it is but the ghost of departed affection that still haunts the spot where once she loved to dwell. They love me still, but I cannot disguise from myself that, had I met them in the world, as I am now, I should have passed them over with indifference.

My head is now full of nothing but travelling. I have a long journey before I reach my new home. I may as well caution you to profit by my experience, and warn you never to travel by an expedition coach, unless you wish to be twice as long on the road as you have any occasion to be. My place was taken at B——, when I came down here. I reached the inn before the time, and was engaged in a very interesting conversation with the kind friends who accompanied me thither to witness my departure, when the waiter came in, and I thought it might be as well to ask how much longer I had to wait. From his answer I learned that the coach had been gone a quarter of an hour, and that there was no other but the Expedition coach that day, moreover I had paid my fare, which was not to be redeemed, and the only way to escape losing it altogether was to go by this terrible coach, which was just setting off. In the coach I found, amongst other inmates, a poor woman with four small children who had already travelled two days and nights. You can form no idea of the horrors of my journey. A Frenchman, who went a few miles with us lifted up his hands and eyes, and observed to me

that he "would not have so much shield for all the world."

You see I am bent upon filling my paper, no matter how. I am giving you as much as I can for your money, as the good people here say when they are about to cheat you into purchasing a worthless article. I might stay till I get to London before I write, but I shall not have any time there, neither do I expect to have any thing more interesting to say. My uncle is a man of business, for whom I have a high respect and even affection; my cousin is very clever and agreeable; but they will neither of them say any thing that will gratify you, I think.

Believe me, as ever,

Yours, &c.

LETTER XXIII.

TO THE REV. E. T. V—.

My dear Friend,

I am thus far on my road to D—. I have no heart to go amongst these strangers. I have never had one letter from the heads of the family, and the letters I have received from Mrs. X— (who has managed all the business) have been of so cold and chilling a nature that I quite shrink from her and all of them. Not one word of encouragement does she give me to come among them: she simply tells me how I may be conveyed, and this information I find incorrect. I came here this afternoon because she told me that a coach would set off to-morrow

morning for D——. Now I find there is no coach to-morrow at all, so I must take a chaise. In the meantime I sit here, and fancy all the *possibilities* of my reception at D——. Why should I tremble so much? Why should I have such a horror of the place? They are but human beings that I am about to encounter, and have I not been told from *very good authority* that the tone of my voice is sufficient to interest every one and subdue all things?—It will not do. My heart turns back to the dear friends I have just left at G——, and my eyes overflow with tears. I am sorry that my paper gives you proof of this. I did not wish to be so heroine-like as to blister it with my tears, but I have not yet arrived at such a pitch of heroism as not to pity myself. I came away without taking leave of my dear Emily's mother. She had wept herself almost blind at the thought of my journey, and I fancied it would soften me too much to see her for the purpose of taking leave. She made me promise that I would not cross the water if the wind blew. I have no fears on this point. It is not the elements that are terrific to me. I only fear men, women, and children.

Monday. — D——.

Well! here I am, "the observed of all observers," as far as my little theatre of action extends. I crossed the water, when it blew a perfect hurricane, in an open boat. I was the only female who dared to venture, but lest you should think me fool-hardy, I will tell you that I was not so well aware of the danger I encountered, at the time, as I am now. The truth

is, I did not consider much about it. "When the mind's free, the body's delicate." My mind was full of nothing but the fate that awaited me on the other side the water. I sat with sufficient composure to notice the varied appearance of the foaming surface. How is it possible for those who "occupy their business in great waters to forget Him by whom its proud waves are stayed!" I stood on the bank wet and cold, surveying every one with anxious eyes, till I heard with great delight that the place of my destination was still some miles off. I then took courage to ascend the bank and enter the inn, where I lingered under the pretence of drying my clothes, till the evening coming on, I was compelled to order the chaise.

It was light enough for me to see that I had stopped before a dismal looking place, coloured black I thought, and the sombre tinge of Newgate presented itself to my recollection. A maid-servant, who opened the door, answered with a most vinegar aspect that her mistress was at home, and that I was to come in, a privilege which just at that moment I was not disposed to estimate very highly. I always succeed in conciliating servants, and have reason to speak with gratitude of the whole race. I began a sort of conversation with this woman, who soon spoke to me in a different tone, and evinced that she had lost the idea of my being come on purpose to increase her plague and trouble, which was the full expression of her face at the first reading. I had full leisure to talk to her, dismiss the post-boy, and survey the entrance passage, and then I could no longer delay the dreaded

moment. The parlour door was opened, and I saw first my two pupils who sat in mute amazement by the fire; their mother then rose, and pushed a chair towards me in a most awkward and ungracious manner. I had not been used to see such uncouthness, and not quite certain of her identity, I said with a slight courtesy, "I presume I have the pleasure of seeing Mrs. R——." "Yes," she grumbled in an indistinct manner, but that was owing perhaps to the loss of her front teeth. I could not disguise from myself that my coming was very unwelcome to her, if I might interpret her most forbidding manner and looks. I sat for a few minutes in silence, most devoutly hoping that all my fancied skill in physiognomy might prove false, for if either I, or Lavater have an atom of truth in our science, there never was a more unpropitious countenance for a poor dependent to contemplate.

Finding that she had taken up the poker to mend the fire, which wanted no such assistance, I fancied her silence might proceed from the mere awkwardness of a person unused to strangers, so I ventured to hope that Mr. R—— was well. "Yes: he is well enough. He ought to have been in the way, but he seldom is when he is wanted. He knew you were coming to-day, but he said the water would be so rough that you could not cross." This was delivered with effort, and in a most ungracious manner, but it opened a subject for me to speak upon, so I told of the horrors of my journey, to all of which she made little or no reply. Almost in despair I began to try

my powers upon the children, but they were equally chilling and inaccessible. I had just settled it in my own mind that I had never seen such children before, and that both they and their mother were more disagreeable than any thing I had ever imagined, when the door opened and their father entered. He is a middle-aged man of a most kind and benign aspect. His whole face was radiant with good-nature. Neither his mind nor his manners have had much cultivation. He has never, as he has since told me, been to any school, but he is well versed in the school of Christ, and there he has learned to extend the hand of kindness, and even of welcome, to the stranger. He seemed to feel all the unpleasantness of my situation, and laboured to put me at my ease, and make me feel at home. In conversation with him I found it easy to get through the evening. I enquired about Mrs. X——, and the only time that the lady of the house joined at all in the conversation was when she observed with some eagerness, that she had been some days on the other side the water, but *she* was afraid to cross in such weather, meaning evidently to infer that it was a most unfeminine thing in *me* to come, and she looked all manner of reproach at me. I could scarcely help smiling even in all the bitterness of my heart, but I said something of my inexperience of the water having made me courageous perhaps from not knowing the danger. How shall I vegetate with such a woman! How came I here? Against her will, I must suppose; and how strange that

seems! My position here is a most extraordinary one. When I write again, I may perhaps be able to solve the enigma.

You ask about my dear Emily. I can tell you nothing that you will like to hear. Her entanglement with B—— appears less likely to be broken than ever, in consequence of some late circumstances which I am not at liberty to explain. She would not confess to her brother that she had any serious regard for him, so he would not believe that the match would ever take place: but she says, (I can see her arch look now) that he, and you, and I, have got such wise heads, and we lay them together and plan for her, and she will marry in opposition to all our wisdom, if it be only to show us how happy she can be. Dear girl! I must not go back even in thought to her happy home, where “my heart is all in flower.” God grant that we may be mistaken in our opinion of her destined husband!

Yours, &c.

LETTER XXIV.

TO MISS M——

I think I have before told you, my dear friend, that you are still so young and inexperienced as to look for perfection in your friends, and are too apt to turn from them in unqualified disgust, when they do not answer to your fond imaginations. Is not this rather extraordinary in one who has a deep

and humbling sense of human corruption, of that indwelling sin whose hydra head is so very apt to spring up in unlooked-for shapes? Do you indeed think that you discover more faults in your own sex than in the other? Depend upon it, you are mistaken. Their faults, I grant you, are of a different nature, but my experience is in favour of the other side. My dear Emily, with her usual vivacity, has often rallied me and called me names, because I have no more predilection for the society of many men, than for that of women. In fact I *do* in general prefer the conversation of men, but a tiresome human creature is just as disagreeable to me in "doublet and hose," as in a cap and petticoat, and I consider this as very natural and proper, and no indication of that philosophic indifference to the more social and binding ties that cheer our pilgrimage below, which she seems to imagine it. But how does this apply to your misdemeanors, or miscalculations rather? I have lectured before on this subject, so I may as well spare you now, especially as your fault in the end brings its own punishment. So let me turn the leaf.

You ask to hear something of my present situation, and wonder I have not written before. Perhaps I should have done it, but really, my dear friend, I have some difficulty in believing that my letters are really so welcome and interesting to you as you say they are, because you are so slow in answering them. You used to like to write to me. I wonder how any one can find it a labour to write to *me*, who am so careless, and commit myself so often, in my letters. When I have to write from my head, I am the dullest

thing alive, I feel what the sailors call "taken all aback," and forget how to spell; but in writing from the heart—sure nothing is so easy.

"A letter," Mr. K—— once said to me, "ought to be a register of events. You are not required to send a record of your folly to any friend." I was set upon thinking how very rarely I wrote a letter such as it ought to be, and at length I came to this comfortable conclusion, that he was certainly wrong, and that this notion was the very cause, why he, who is so delightful in conversation, is so very dry and unsatisfactory on paper. He is so much afraid of committing himself, that he will not let *himself* appear at all in his letters. Now if my friends do not want to hear about *me*, they must not ask me to write. I hope you will take the hint, but now I remember you "*never do take hints*," so it is of no use pelting you with such soft balls, and if I take up any other you awake, and cry mercy, and call names, and go on as usual.

I have just received a long letter from Mrs. B——, to complain of my backwardness in writing. I never said I would correspond with her, but she says she is so impatient at my long silence (she should correspond with you) that she can bear it no longer. She has been in the neighbourhood of my sweet pupils, whose memory I shall always love, but to her I am bankrupt in affection, and feel like an ingrate when I receive such professions of regard. I cannot describe to you the overwhelming effect that her letters have upon me. After reading this, I laid my head down upon the table quite oppressed and miser-

able, and it was some time before I could "call spirits from the vasty deep" sufficient to resume my duties. Her style of writing is of that fluent commonplace sort, that I suppose is necessary to form what is called a good letter-writer. She wrote this letter, I have no doubt, as she does all her others, sitting at her desk, laughing and talking with her guests, and thinking just as much about the person she addressed, as to enable her to round her periods, and apply her ready-cut and dried sentences to her case. She is "quite sure that no situation will make me tolerably happy away from my friends, my tender health and delicate mind require the eye of watchful and assiduous affection, and she would strongly advise me to *choose* a situation near some of my friends." As if I had not always tried for such a happiness! She might just as reasonably advise me to take up my abode in the moon. How easy it is to give advice! Some of my friends content themselves with doing this. "Miserable comforters are ye all!" I am tempted to say. He who disposes of our fate hath fixed the bounds of my abode, and though all creature comforts are withheld, yet even here shall His hand lead me and sustain me.

You inquire about my dear friends at G——. All are well, with the exception of your friend N——. She was so abundantly happy, and her beloved K—— was so much the idol of her heart, that she thought only of him, and talked only of him, and at last took it into her head to wish to see some "cherished one to look resembling him." Her wish seem-

ed likely to be granted, and she ran about the village begging us “only to think of her good fortune!!” Some of us, I believe, thought she might as well be quiet; and so it proved, for she walked, and ran, and laughed, and talked, till she half killed herself, and destroyed her hopes; and if she had lost six children all in one day she could not have been more of a weeping Niobe. She is gone to C—— to be under the care of Dr. O——, but so miserably nervous and anxious, that if he should once hint that no more such hopes will arise, he will certainly at one stroke kill her, and K——, and papa, and Mr. and Mrs. Q——, and Betty, and the coachman, such a fuss do they keep up about it.

I hope you want to know how I am fixed here. Well, it must be reserved now for another sheet of paper. I shall judge whether you are really anxious, by the time which you take in telling me so. If you write soon, I will promise to send another despatch in which the personal pronouns shall bear a very great preponderance. What a temptation do I hold out! Let me see that it is irresistible.

Ever yours, &c.

LETTER XXV.

TO THE REV. E. T. V——.

My dear friend,

You are anxious to hear a more favourable account of my present situation than my last letter contained. Alas! I wish I could so far

gratify you, but my first impression was a correct one. Every succeeding day has helped to confirm it. The uncouth way in which I was at first received by the lady of the house is partly to be accounted for by her manners being at all times awkward and unlike a lady; but, in addition to this, I find that my being here at all is in direct opposition to her will. Her husband is a man of extraordinary piety, and was very anxious that his children should be placed under the tuition of a person who would second his views, but instead of sending them from home, he took counsel of his affections, and thought he could bring over his wife to admit of a governess. She was poorly I was told, and could not write to me, so the business was managed by Mrs. X——, and in this way I was smuggled into the house. You may conceive that my position is not a very agreeable one. If this poor woman is not an avowed infidel, she yet tries to make her children so. It is hardly credible to what lengths she will go to turn her excellent husband into ridicule, and counteract all his efforts to implant good principles in the minds of the children. As far as I can judge, he is one of the best of men, but I think he has done wrong with respect to me. There should have been no concealment. I should have been told of this woman's temper and principles, and of her opposition to my coming, and then if my necessities had driven me to accept the situation, why then perhaps I should have been equally pitiable, but no blame could have been thrown on him. He had a right to do as he pleased in his

own house—yes, but it is of no use arguing the point; a great deal, as Sir Roger de Coverly says, may be said on both sides—here I am, and I must make the best of it.

We see no company. The unhappy opposition in principles and opinions between this ill-matched pair keeps every body away. The card parties that she would like, he cannot suffer in his house, and his friends she does what she can to disgust. He has one or two old friends who continue to brave her ungracious manner, and who now and then present themselves, but in general we are entirely alone. You may conceive that my time is not very agreeably spent, when the children are gone to bed in the evening, and I am alone with her, for Mr. K—— does not appear till supper. I weary myself with vain efforts to break the awkward silence that she seems determined to preserve. Any thing like conversation is quite out of the question.

I think it is Dr. Johnson who says that marriages would be quite as happy if they were settled by the Lord Chancellor. I think this poor man would have stood a better chance if any body had settled his marriage rather than himself. His person must have been very agreeable; his countenance is very fine even now; and I sit and wonder how he could have made such a mistake: but I suppose he married her at an age when,

“Folly and Innocence are so alike,

“The difference though essential fails to strike.”

After I had been here some days, or rather weeks, I began to turn my thoughts to Mrs. X——, through whose means I came here. “Surely,” I thought, “she must be on visiting terms at least, and her society cannot fail to break the dreary way in an agreeable manner,” but here too I am thrown out. I learnt from the children that “papa” often went to see her, and that *they* went, and she lived in a beautiful place, but “mamma” did not like them to go. “She said Mrs. X—— was a methodist like papa, and she would make *them* so if she let them go!”—“And what is a methodist, my dear?”—“I don’t know,” said the little creature, “but I think it is a naughty thing.”—“But you do not think your papa naughty?”—She repeated, “mamma says he is a methodist.” I only answered, “your papa is a good man,” but you may conceive how much I was shocked to hear a child speak in such terms of her fond and excellent parent.

Last night, before my usual hour of descending from my throne in the school-room, I was told that Mrs. X—— had called and desired to see me. I felt something of the awe which this lady seems to inspire in every body as I came down stairs, but the slight and almost imperceptible courtesy, and the high and mighty look which she assumed when I appeared before her, restored me to myself. My mind is not of that stuff which is ever awed by a fine house or a full purse. If I see one who has attained to high honour in the christian progress I feel humbled to the dust, but all other human greatness I am very

philosophic about ; so the very manner which Mrs. X—— intended should mark the amazing distance between us, had just the contrary effect. I was quite at my ease in a moment. She did not sit down, “only called in passing,” as she took care to tell me, and desired the servant to tell the man to bring the carriage up for she was ready. She just condescended to ask when I arrived, whether I did not admire the beautiful country, to which I gave suitable answers, and I believe the parting courtesy which I made was as cold and distant as her heart could wish. Her person is tall and elegantly formed, her face rather handsome, but the whole expression corresponds with the commanding air of her figure. Will you think me severe when I say that I have never seen such a countenance before ? I was afraid to translate the expression, but there was a determined look, a dauntless courage, a relentless purpose—“the will to do, the hand to dare”—in short I could not help saying, such a face as that I should choose to draw for Lady Macbeth, when she reproaches her husband for being “infirm of purpose.” I am persuaded that she is no common character, but I will not be hasty in my judgment.

I feel very lonely, but I try to be satisfied and thankful in the performance of duties to which I am certainly equal. I cannot *here* be rejected for incompetency. I will bear in mind what good Mr. I—— said the other day—“General society is not desirable : their conversation may lead me from myself, but it

will not lead me to God." I am afraid I am too fond of being led from myself.

Yours, &c.

LETTER. XXVI.

TO THE REV. E. T. V—.

My dear Friend,

Do you remember the sentence pronounced upon the children of Israel? "And thou shalt find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest; but the Lord shall give thee a *trembling heart*, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind: and thou shalt fear day and night; in the morning thou shalt say, 'would God it were even,' and at even thou shalt say, 'would God it were morning,' for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear." Surely there are others included in this curse besides these rebellious children. My daily experience obliges me to number myself amongst them.

But let me try to forget myself a little, or rather put aside for a while the dark shades of the picture, for I do not promise you to go very far from my own concerns. I have been looking again at your letter. I think I have reason to be thankful that you no longer cast over me a radiance that belongs only to your imagination. I am amazed that you should ever have done it, for I can recollect no instance of assisting you in the delusion. Perhaps you may be very thankful that I never had such fancies about you; for which

of the two is the most valuable, think you, an affection founded on the vagaries of the imagination, or the sober steady flame which requires no such fuel to keep it burning? You will not fail to draw the proper conclusion, and humble yourself accordingly, and so I must graciously pardon your mistakes and wanderings. In sober truth, I am not one who would undervalue the power of imagination. I often think that the happiest among us require some such gilding to make us endure the many evils of our existence, but I think still it is a faculty which ought to be kept in constant check, rather than nursed and indulged. The christian may indeed have the happy privilege of indulging himself in exploring the unseen realities of another state of existence: in fact, I know of nothing else that can make the decline of life *reasonably* happy, except the power of looking forward to that futurity in which the wildest flights of his imagination will be realized.

Only think of your recommending a novel to me to read! Do you suppose I waste my time about such naughty books? I beg leave to tell you that I read—the newspaper and the Farmer's Journal, and if you want to know any thing about the diseases of sheep, the smut in wheat, or the best method of fattening pigs, I may perhaps be able to give you the newest information on the subject. But seriously speaking, I lament very much the want of books. To what few there are in the house I have free access, but they are not of a description to do much towards enlivening my solitude. I had a complete ransack the other day,

and I ended in despair. The only book of poetry that I found was an odd volume of Pope. His letters too are here. It is unfortunate that I never could like this great poet. I am always obliged to admit his excellence when he comes in my way, but there is a cold heartlessness about the polish of his lines that inwardly displeases me. Then his opinion of our sex is so very unjust, and sometimes he is so indelicate ! But that belonged to the age in which he wrote. I am very glad that this is one of the improvements of ours. The writers of former days would not be tolerated now.

I have read Christian morals, and my opinion was just what yours is. I have also swallowed, with all due respect for Mr. Gisborne, "the Duties of Women." To be sure it is all very excellent, but it bears the mark of so much labour ! I fully intend to look at the book again, for perhaps my disturbed state of mind was the thing that made it wearisome. I have not formed any acquaintance yet. I have seen very few people, and they have been for the most part gentlemen. I have often envied Emily her power of assimilating herself to every body. Did you never observe the sweet and artless manner by which she attracts and binds even men of the most opposite dispositions. I can do no such thing. I feel at a distance from every body. It is only long intimacy that unlocks my heart. Mr. K—— said last night, "When I know that a man's principles are right, that he is really in earnest in his religious profession, I feel at home with him directly, my heart is all open to

him." I felt ashamed of my own coldness. I admire and highly venerate his character, but I think I could never be on terms of familiarity with him. You would like him very much. It is beautiful to see his religion brought to bear on all the every-day occurrences of his life; to see a temper naturally quick and irritable gradually subdued, and every fault of his character yielding to the influence of the vital spark within. It is well for him that he has the high hopes and consolations of the christian, for certainly *his* portion is not in this life. He is alone in his path. On her side there is the silence of the grave on this subject, and every bad propensity, and evil humour, seems nursed and encouraged to set in array against his peace.

But I was going to observe, before this digression, that there are many men whom I like to hear talk, but very few whom I like to talk to. I was perfectly delighted the other day with a gentleman who dined here, and with whom I think I did not exchange a word, but I sat still and enjoyed his sarcastic vein of humour, and the entire originality of his character. He is a very fine and a very brave naval officer. He has been twenty years in constant service, but having a fine estate in this neighbourhood, he thought in the simplicity of his heart to retire, and end his days in peace. Would you believe it? his wife is become so patriotic that she will not let him! "Really," she says, "it is quite a shame that such a fine able commander should be here, doing nothing but watching a few dirty sheep and oxen!" At first he laughed at her, but mark the end; she was fixed in her purpose, so

she changed her battery, and made his home intolerable. He has accordingly applied for a ship, and "shall be very glad," he says, "to haul the main-tack on board, and go to a land where there are no women." Did you ever hear of any patriotism like that of this lady? I love my country very much, but I love my relations and friends better, and I am afraid it would be a very long time before I could attain to such Roman virtue as hers. I am rather anxious to see this extraordinary person.

Yours, &c.

LETTER XXVII.

TO THE REV. E. T. V—.

My dear Friend,

Did you ever observe how much consequence people derive from being ill-tempered? Perhaps you have never been much in contact with a person whose temper was suffered to run riot, and make havoc of the happiness of all around; if so, it may not perhaps have struck you, but in all their varieties and modifications, you may always observe, that ill-tempered people have more weight and influence in society than any other. As one instance out of many that I could give, this poor woman, whose temper drives every body away from her, had been sulking for more than a week. Nobody had heard the sound of her voice, I think. Well! a party was formed to go to the farm, and many fears were entertained that she would not recover herself

so far as to admit of its taking place. However symptoms of amendment appeared, the cloud seemed likely to clear away, and every creature about her was employed to sooth her humours and invite the coming sunshine. By dint of past experience, and uncommon care and attention, we succeeded in laying the demon to rest for a while, and the day past off smoothly, indeed pleasantly to me, for I was out of her sight for the greatest part of the time.

Captain and Mrs. C—— of whom I spoke in my last, were of the party. Notwithstanding all her extraordinary fancies and inconsistencies, I really liked Mrs. C—— very much. I found in her so much kindness and cordiality, that my heart was open to her, and I could not help thinking there were some unknown reasons for her conduct with respect to her husband. She seemed to feel an interest for my situation, and though I hold it a breach of confidence to say any thing about any family in which I reside, yet this poor woman's temper is so well known that it seemed as if I could tell nothing new, if I told all that I had seen of it; but I was very cautious, and contented myself with saying, that I had never met with any one so uniformly *silent* before. "Oh!" said Mrs. C——, "don't let that disturb you. She never talks, she has nothing to say, she feels nothing, she thinks of nothing, she is weighed down by her own stupidity." Much more she said to the same purpose, and she appeared to take so kind an interest in my welfare, that I was perhaps influenced by it in the judgment that I could not help forming. I fan-

ced that I could discover, amidst all her husband's agreeable and entertaining qualities, that she might have just reasons for dissatisfaction.

In the course of the day we were divided into different parties, to explore the beauties of the place. I thought of you who delight so much in fine scenery. How delighted you would have been ! We, that is, one or two of the younger part of the company joined by Captain C——, walked down the meadows into a deep dell overhung by high cliffs, the green foliage only broken by the pale grey rocks, that appeared now and then amongst the trees. In one place the cliffs form a little amphitheatre, as if to screen and shelter a very pretty cottage ; a bubbling brook of “ liquid crystal ” finds its way over stones and roots, and in one place it forms a natural cascade ; a little above that, a bridge of the rudest architecture imaginable, broken down, and the ruin partially concealed by moss and creeping ivy, is thrown over the stream, to assist you to reach a path in the wood above, which looks too precipitous for any human foot to venture upon. This romantic spot must be soon destroyed, because it seems there is a paper-mill lower down. The stream belongs to the proprietors, who must repair the bridge, and the woman of the cottage, who seemed to have as little taste for the picturesque as any English boor that I ever saw, observed that she hoped they would do it in a proper manner, with brick and mortar, and not as it had been used to be done, for it had not been safe for a long time.

We stood here admiring the beauties of the spot, and Captain C—— was very amusing. He observed

how piously one might sit down in this little dell, and curse all the world beside; and hoped, when he was the hermit of the glen, we would come and do homage to him. Just in the midst of his rhodomontade, we saw Mrs. C—— and some of the rest of the party descending the pathway to us. He pointed to her and sang, "I sigh and lament me in vain: Hard, hard is my fate! Oh! how galling my chain." "My dear?" he said, "would you be so obliging as to take the opportunity of drowning yourself in the mill-pool yonder; for these young ladies have all been confessing that they are in love with me; and really it is very hard that such a handsome young fellow as I am, should be tied to an old woman?" Mrs. C—— has the appearance of being older, but her delicate health and anxious temper, may have added more years to her looks than she has a right to. She smiled faintly, but I thought she looked as if she did not half relish the jest, so I refused the arm that he offered to assist me up the hill, and offered mine to Mrs. C——. She leaned rather heavily upon me, and I was obliged to stop and rest. "Served me right," he said, "for hoisting false colours, and then going over to the enemy. He expected I should founder, for my timbers were not sound." "If you would be serious for a moment, Captain C——, I have something to say to you," said Mrs. C——. She then told us both, that Mrs. X——, who had looked unutterable things all day, had been making farther inquiries, and had discovered beyond a doubt, that her step-daughter had lately en-

couraged a gentleman in the neighbourhood to renew his offer, and that she was so furious about it that she did not expect she would govern herself when we met at tea. "The young lady," she said, "is quite old enough to judge for herself, but she is so timid, or rather so overawed by her step-mother, that I quite pity her. You are the only one of the party who is not afraid of Mrs. X——, so mind you take the poor girl's part if any thing should be said."

When we all met at tea, I was very thankful that I knew how to interpret Mrs. X——'s ominous looks, for I never see a cloud on any one's brow, that I do not expect it to burst on my head. It is much more agreeable to have somebody besides yourself to pity, and really as this young lady has her fortune in her own hands, and requires only a proper degree of firmness and courage to burst her own bonds, I could not find in my heart to pity her so very much. I sat therefore a quiet looker on, waiting in expectation that the rage, which I saw boiling in the lady's bosom, would overflow. After some faint attempts at general conversation, Mrs. X—— began by inuendoes. At length, she expatiated on the change in female manners till she came to the point in question, that it was the very acme of indelicacy for a young lady to ask a gentleman to have her; and this she insisted upon it was done, when the lady gave him to understand that she wished him to renew an offer, which she had once refused. Captain C—— looked so full of malicious enjoyment, that I expected her to fly at him. She darted towards him a look of fury, and said, "I

am sure, Captain C——, you must agree with me.” “Perfectly Ma’am—indeed, I think it highly indelicate for a young lady to marry at all. I am always amazed that any man should have dared to offend *your* purity by asking you to stoop to such earthly considerations. I am sure I should have grovelled in the mire for ever before I should have lifted my eyes up to you; but I met with one as impure as myself. I am really quite shocked when I remember poor Mrs. C——’s readiness to accept me.” His wife gave him a box on the ear, and he said, “Well, I won’t tell how eager you were to be married, my dear: but take warning, young ladies, and do not think of matrimony till you are turned of seventy at least, and as I shall then be about ninety, I offer myself to one or both of you. Then how sweetly we shall platonize! All the grosser particles of our nature will have been purged away, and we shall sit and blink at each other in such purity!” And he took up Lady B——’s spectacles, and imitated the shaking palsy of old age so admirably, that we all laughed, and even Mrs. X—— was obliged in a degree to join, and thus the storm passed over, but they say it will be a terrible struggle for this young lady to carry her point. She is highly accomplished, and has an agreeable person, but her mamma has hitherto had power to make her refuse every offer. Whether she will set this aside remains to be proved.

Yours, &c.

LETTER XXVIII.

TO THE REV. E. T. V.—

My dear Friend,

I sent you a great deal of nonsense in my last letter, and I wish I could do the same again, for any thing is better than my own miseries; but I fear I must not reckon upon many more such bright spots in my path. I have suffered a good deal of anxiety and distress since I wrote last, not from any positive cause, but like your Angelina, “anticipation ever appears in the form of superlatives.” I fear it will be quite impossible for me to remain here consistently with the respect which I owe to myself, this unhappy woman’s conduct is so extremely rude and ungracious to me. I told you of her silence and her disagreeable manner, but I reasoned in this way, “I cannot have every thing as I wish, I must in every situation have something to bear, and as long as I can perform my duty conscientiously, I will go on.” I have uniformly persevered in my own line of conduct. I have never noticed any of her rudeness. When alone with her I have laboured (I am sure the labour of the tread-mill was nothing to it) to preserve that sort of complaisant behaviour or civility, due from one human being to another, and I have contrived to keep up some sort of talk, and I really began to think myself amazingly clever in thus accommodating myself to the lowest capacity. Yes, it is no conceit on my part to say so, for I certainly never saw one before so low in the scale of intellect,

though she *was* educated by Hannah More. Well, I was confirmed in my determination to bear all the disagreeables that I met with, by the success which seemed to attend my efforts with respect to the children. Every body spoke of their improvement, and Mrs. X—— said in a very pointed manner that she thought they were particularly fortunate in meeting with such a governess. I fancy that this unlucky speech is the cause of Mrs. K——’s present behaviour, for she has been pointedly rude to me ever since.

She went out for a week, and all the time she was gone, I watered her plants, and fed her birds, and took care of every thing. She had not desired me to do it, for indeed she left the house without ever wishing me good morning, but I thought it might help to conciliate her, and I fancied her fit of ill-humour would pass away ; but alas, it is worse than ever. I am entirely at a loss to know the cause, except that the youngest child the other day said, “ what have you done naughty to mamma ? she can’t bear you, she says ; I heard her tell papa so ; and he said, you were good ; and mamma said you were not, for you were as deceitful and as proud as you were high.” ’Tis very well that I am not six feet, if that is to be the measure of my iniquity ; but the child said still more, that “ mamma said I talked so fine, and pretended to be better than any body else.” I can hardly help laughing as I write this stuff, though it is, alas ! no laughing matter to me. I may perhaps be glad that she can find nothing more than these indefinite charges. But what good shall I ever

do with these children, when she suffers them to hear her speak of me in this way?

She has been sulking with her husband for the last fortnight, but to-day she is on speaking terms with him. Poor man! the other day a person was spoken of who was going to marry a man of different principles from her own: "Tell her from me," said he, "that she is going to do a thing which she will repent of, every day, aye, every hour of her life; tell her," he added in all the bitterness of a wounded spirit, "that one who has proved the misery, and whose life is wearing away with it, sends her the caution." I never heard him speak on the subject so openly before. I have been very careful to steer clear of all allusions to it, when I have been in conversation with him. But I must tell you that I have heard it said, that he deserves the bitter cup he is drinking, for he threw away an affection that would have made him happy. He met with this woman, when there had been some little difference between him and the other. She was a forsaken old maid, and her connexions being higher than his own, he was pleased with the attentions they paid him. He was flattered by the advances she made, and her friends all helped to persuade him that she was in love with him, for they had long found her a disagreeable burthen upon their hands, so in an evil hour he married her. Oh! what wretches you men are, even the very best!

I have thought a great deal of that faithful love which has induced the poor forsaken lady to remain

single. I think if I could meet with her, I should be tempted to let her know how amply she is revenged. You will be shocked at my imagining that such information could give her pleasure. Well, I do not suppose it would, but as to saying that I should be glad to hear that the man I loved was happy with another woman, it is all nonsense. It may be very fine, and very sublime, to sit up and *talk* of such things, but as to *feeling* so very angelic, I am sure I never could in my heart, neither am I charitable enough to think that any one else would, who really loved, though perhaps few would be honest enough to confess it. I would from principle do every thing I could to promote the happiness of any one, even of my bitterest enemy, but this you know is not a natural feeling, it springs from a higher and purer source than I could find in myself. Do you remember that exquisite passage—“*Chercheriez vous encore ce qu’ on appelle le bonheur ? Ah ! trouverez vous mieux que ma tendresse ?*” But what have I to do with such imaginary distress ? The realities of life press sorely upon me. This wretched woman seems determined to force me to resign my situation. Her behaviour was so rude to-day at dinner, that her husband lost his temper, and asked her in a stern voice, if she was not ashamed of herself. I took no notice, but retired as soon as possible, and relieved my full heart alone ; but surely I ought to give notice to leave. I certainly would immediately, but I dread the impression that such a step must produce upon my friends, I dread the anxiety that must follow.

Farewell.

LETTER XXIX.

TO THE REV. E. T. V—

My dear Friend,

I ought to be writing to Mrs. D——, but I really have not capacity to write a letter fit to be seen to-day. I pay you a compliment in sitting down to scribble to you at such a time. It seems as if I thought any thing would do for you. I never pretend to write any thing to you that is fit to be seen ; now, Mrs. D—— must have a letter as well as I can indite one. She is very kind, and means nothing but my good, but she quite mistakes the way to comfort me. She rallies me on my low spirits, takes not the least notice of any thing I asked her, or any thing I told her, but describes parties of pleasure, &c. I don't want to hear who is dead and who is married. I read three newspapers every week, and I always sit down to write *myself*. She writes about every thing in the world besides, never once alludes to my embarrassing situation here, but endeavours to amuse me by describing the happiness and comfort of other people. Now, I don't want to be amused, I want to be cared for, and to be advised what to do. I cannot reconcile my remaining here with my own notions of propriety, but Mrs. X—— says, “ why should you care for this woman's vulgar insolence ? be satisfied with the transformation you have wrought in the children, and for the sake of their excellent father go on with your duties.” So here I am.

It is really fearful to see to what lengths evil tempers may carry one, when they are indulged without any check. I had become fond of a little kitten, and as I think it right to make myself as happy as I can everywhere, I had really taken a great deal of pleasure in caressing it, and I fancied the little creature knew me. Mr. K—— has a great dislike to cats, but seeing the amusement that this kitten afforded me, he smiled upon it with his usual benevolence, and said, “Well! really, Miss Pussy, you are made such a pet, that I think we shall never persuade you to sully your paws with a mouse.” Would you believe that the little innocent creature has been sacrificed to the vengeance of Mrs. K——? She no sooner found that I was amused by it, than she sent it away, *where* we cannot tell, but I suppose it is drowned, or hunted to death by the boys in the street; it is too small to provide for itself. I am almost ashamed to think how much this circumstance has affected me. You must not laugh at me, for you do not know what you may come to, nor how ridiculous it is possible to be under certain circumstances.

I grieve to hear how much you are disappointed in your ministerial exertions, but were you not too sanguine at first? I thought of you lately when our excellent pastor here was speaking of the great difficulty he found in keeping alive an unwearied zeal in his Master’s service. Sometimes he was ready to lay by his hand, and fancy that he was too unworthy to be made an instrument of good to any one. “God be praised, however,” said he, “that though I have

seen no fruit in this place, yet I can be thankful to Him even for this trial of my faith."

I cannot help smiling when, in trying to give me confidence, you expatiate on my power of pleasing every body when I talk! so others of my friends have said and sung; and I have always laughed in my sleeve, and made no attempt to undeceive them; for I have no objection to your, or their, fancying such things; but I know *myself*. I know that there is not one man, or woman in five hundred, who would give one farthing to hear me talk, and I am more than even with them on that score.

Emily talks of my coming to them when you are in the country. I have made no answer, for I mean to be entreated a great deal more than that, before I move on such an occasion.

I have lately seen some of your college friends. Mr. and Mrs. D—— dined here. The good lady mentioned Mr. A—— and Mr. B——, and at last you. Of your friend W——, she said, "Ah! he is a very *honest* man; he always behaved well amongst us." She was called away just then, so I lost the chance of hearing how *you* behaved at college, and whether she thought you an *honest man*. But, seriously speaking, I was very much delighted on the whole with this good old man and his wife: their manners were so primitive, so unlike what one usually sees. Mrs. K—— was displeased at their being invited, for they are religious professors, and she is not ashamed to declare that she hates the sight of such people. She scarcely behaved with common

civility, and I saw that Mrs. X—— was so indignant as scarcely to be able to command herself. My condition is more tolerable when there is any other object of her hatred in the way.

I have spent a very pleasant day at X—— House, where I met Lady B——, and several other very agreeable people, who behaved to me with so much kindness and cordiality, that I felt quite at ease with them, and, as you would call it, I had great success in talking. Mrs. X—— herself, who evidently meant to be very distant with me at first, was all smiles and affability. She even observed to a person near her, “Now you see the truth of what I have often told you, that nothing can be so advantageous as the society of clever and sensible men. Miss C—— has had this advantage. In this country we wish for it, but there are no such people.” She said too of the children, “Oh! if you could but have seen what they were before Miss C—— came, but their mother is enough to ruin a host of children.” After all this, I returned to my home quite lifted above its horrors, and, as I thought, fortified against all its depressing atmosphere.

Farewell.

LETTER XXX.

TO THE REV. E. T. V.—

My dear Friend,

We may well say, “we cannot tell what a day may bring forth.” How little did I expect, when I closed my last letter, and directed it to a distant country, that you were within a few miles of me, and with my dear G—— friends on the road to see me ! I shall never forget that hasty note from my dear Emily, to summon me to the inn. It was almost too much for mortal frame to bear, to hear and see you all, and know that it was not a dream, but that you were all to stay over the next day. I looked forward to that happy day, as if it would never end, and really I did enjoy an age of bliss. I seemed as if I was suddenly transported to another world. How delightful it is to breathe freely, and to feel that you may think and speak just what you please ! After my long season of restraint, the little day of unreserved converse with such dear friends, was like the refreshment of cool water on a dry, parched, and thirsty land. Yet, do you know, I am almost tempted to quarrel with you all for not telling me beforehand that you were coming, because I lost all the pleasure of anticipation.

I believe too that I exerted myself too much in walking about to show you the beauties of this country, which I never enjoyed before, but I did not feel my weariness till the next morning, after my walk with you to the water-side. I sat upon the stones,

and watched your boat, till you all landed on the opposite shore, and faded from my sight "like the baseless fabric of a vision," and then I began to cry like a baby at my desertion and loneliness, till all the pig-drivers and post-boys were staring, and perhaps laughing at me. I turned my face homewards and began to call up thoughts to comfort me. I remembered the kind entreaties of our dear G—— friends that I would come to them now for the vacation, and the thought came, as Ossian would say, "like the evening sun upon my soul:" but then, I had to propose this, and though Mr. K—— is all kindness, yet I was puzzling about the how and the when. I met Mr. P—— who is the most intimate friend of Mr. K——. In the course of conversation I told him my difficulty, and he offered to speak to Mr. K—— for me, but after some consideration I declined this proposal. He told me that Mr. K—— had often mentioned my sad situation to him, and very much feared that I should not be able to bear it much longer. He said that he was never alone with me that he did not expect me to give him notice that I should leave, and he had quite a nervous horror of it. Now, amidst all my troubles, the dread of being without a situation has always been the most terrible idea, so I felt more comfortable when my fate seemed to be in my own hands; and when he said, "I assure you Mr. K—— will feel himself much indebted to you if you *can* put up with the treatment you receive," I felt quite re-assured, and relieved of a

great deal of anxiety. I found myself equal to the burthen of the day.

The next day I was left quite alone, and I was surprised by the sight of Mrs. X——'s carriage at the door, and still more when she said—"I should not have come if I had not heard that you were alone." She said many obliging things, regretted that she did not see more of me, but said, she "really could not tolerate the vulgar insult with which Mrs. K—— had lately thought fit to treat her. I hope," she added, "that she conducts herself better to you." I could not say any thing very satisfactory on that point, but I said "as I had invariably preserved the same line of conduct towards her, the temper which she showed did not affect me so much as it would do if I were ever provoked to recriminate; at the same time, I could not but feel that my tenure was a very precarious one; her temper was so violent and ungovernable, that I might find it impossible to remain, and I thought myself bound to stipulate for a quarter's notice." She looked steadfastly at me, and said "you have no intention of giving notice I hope." I said very truly, "that I had no prospect of any other situation, and I had no home, and though my friends had always been the kindest that any creature ever had, yet I was very unwilling to be a burthen to them."

The next day I saw Mr. K—— alone, and I went to him to speak about my visit to G——. He advanced to meet me. I saw what he apprehended, and I hastened to my purpose, in which he perfectly

acquiesced, and observing that I looked ill, he hoped the children had not been very troublesome. "They behave as well as I can expect," I said, and I wanted to ask him something about them, but one of those piercing heavy sighs prevented me, and I continued silent. As we were entering the house, he stopped and said, "I am perfectly satisfied with the improvement of the children: you are aware that I do every thing I can to make your situation tolerable."

I rather think Mrs. K—— fancied that I had gone to him to tell that the children had both told me, that their mamma desired them "not to mind any thing I said, for I was good for nothing." I am glad that I have never once made any report of her, nor indeed mentioned her conduct in any way to him. I saw at dinner that her face was terrible to look upon, so I did not look at her again, but when I spoke in a low voice to one of the children to tell her how to manage a bone on her plate, the storm burst forth—she desired the child to eat as she liked, and not to learn of me any fine mincing ways. I stared in amazement at her grossness, but Mr. K—— answered for me. He told her she might be ashamed of her rude unfeeling conduct, especially to me who had never done a single thing to provoke such behaviour. He then said to me—"Miss C——, while I am master of this house, and you do me the favour to stay in it, your authority over these children shall not be disputed." She said, "I was proud as a duchess; that I was always persuading the children, and him too, that I was so clever, and that she knew

nothing; and that indeed she felt like a cipher in the house." I did not attempt to answer these groundless charges, but Mr. K—— said, "I do declare that Miss C—— has never, directly or indirectly, spoken to me of your conduct. She has borne the grossest insults in perfect silence. Her conduct to you has been that of a lady, and, what is better, it has been worthy of a christian. I have often wondered at her forbearance, and" (turning to a gentleman who happened to be present) he said, "you know I have often spoken of it to you before."

I felt humbled at his praise, for I knew that my feelings had not been always such, as He who seeth in secret could approve. The cloth was not removed, or I should have left the table; I did as soon as possible, but not before Mr. K—— had said to her—"You have ruined my health and my peace, and you would ruin your children, but you will never have the power I hope while I live, and at my death you will find that I have taken care to remove them from your influence and example. And now," he added, "I have only to repeat what I have said; Miss C——, if you cannot stay in this house, and will open a school, I will send these children to you." I only bowed, and when I met him at supper he was alone. He lamented that he had lost the command over his temper, but said, "you will visit your friends, and perhaps the evil spirit may be subdued I when you return, and if you can try another quarter shall feel the more obliged." I acquiesced, but with little hope. The gentleman who was present, hap-

pened to be a friend whose presence always exasperates Mrs. K——, for she knows that he all but went upon his knees to persuade Mr. K—— not to marry her. Perhaps her explosion of temper was in some degree on his account.

You will wonder at this long letter, but tell the contents to my dear friends, and Emily will say when I may come.

Yours, &c.

LETTER XXXI.

TO MISS K——.

My dear Emily,

I purpose crossing the water with the mail on Saturday morning, and hope to reach you the same evening. I wish I could have told you this as you desired, by return of post, but it was impossible. This letter *must* be very short, and, strange to say, my inclination accords with the necessity. I have no heart to write, or do any thing. I am only conscious of one feeling, a kind of half regret and reluctance to undertake this journey, though it is to convey me to my dearest friends. That excitement and fever of mind, which helped to bear me up in the scene which has been partly unfolded to you is over, and I have leisure to contemplate the desolation around me. My mind is exhausted with the efforts I have made to compose it, and to hush its anxious fears to rest. I faint beneath the "heavy weight of all this unintelligible world." I look be-

yond it, and would fain implore the rest which belongs not to *me*; for what have I to do with Heaven, I who shrink appalled from the duties of life: who turn sickening from the bitter draught, before perhaps it is half finished? May I call myself a christian?

Mr. K——, I see appears sunk in dejection, and the evil spirit, which occasions all this misery, appears still in full vigour. I find that Mr. K——relies on my promise of trying the next quarter, but I doubt if I ought to remain here, because I much fear that I cannot do any good with the children under such peculiar circumstances. I hope my present depression will give way to the sun-shine of your presence. It was not possible for me to write to *you*, and conceal my state of mind.

Ever most affectionately yours.

LETTER XXXII.

TO THE REV. E. T. V——.

My dear Friend,

Here I am again, returned to my *habitat*, but I do not find it swept and garnished. The same atmosphere prevails as when a month since I left this terrible woman, in hopes that the evil spirit would take its flight before my return, but here I find it in full vigour, casting its deadly shade over every creature and thing within its influence. It does not however affect me as much as it did. My mind is revived by the sun-shine that it has lately enjoyed. In my box of evils I find a little hope at the bottom, and this lightens my load.

You have soon to feel the pain that I have just endured. You will not like to leave our dear friends to return to a distant country, but then the “bounds of your abode” are determined, and no doubt it is well that it should be so. May I tell you, without wounding you, that I think your present way of life very undesirable? I would not for all the world live *always* in such a constant round of gay company, and dinner-parties. It may not be so with *you*. There may perhaps be few, whose minds require such constant watchfulness and circumspection as mine does; but I feel and know, that if I were to lead such a life as you have done lately, every thought of the end and purpose of my being would be dissipated, and “the night when no man can work” would “come upon me unawares.”

You would rather I should tell you of my journey than preach to you: well, I reached C—— in safety, and found a gentleman waiting to receive me, and to beg that I would do him the favour to remain at his house instead of the inn. His wife was at home expecting me, and would have walked with him but for an unexpected occurrence. This kindness I owed to the interposition of the kind family at D——, who have all shown me so much attention. They wished to spare me the disagreeable necessity of sleeping at an inn. I was very glad to avail myself of Mr. M——’s invitation. I found his wife a plain young woman, of uncultivated mind and unpolished manners; but she was a simple natural character, and I liked what I saw of her very much. She told me

that the Miss I——s were in town, and in the course of half an hour they called. These kind girls had left a party that they were in to come up and speak to me, because I was among strangers.

Rather an odd circumstance happened. They told me they thought Mr. K—— was in town. They knew that he crossed the water yesterday, with the bride who was married that morning. You remember my telling you of this young lady. One of the Miss I——s wished to return with me, and if she could discover that Mr. K—— was going in the morning, she would like to join us in a chaise. Accordingly we begged Mr. M—— to make inquiries at the inn which he frequented. When he returned, he said Mr. K—— was still there, but he was gone out. He waited some time, but as Mr. K—— did not come in, he left the house, thinking I might call in the morning. So in the morning I went down with him. The waiter said Mr. K—— was not up. He came in late last night and gave orders not to be disturbed. I begged him to see if he was awake. "No, he was not," and he was afraid to call him. The coach was to start in a few minutes. I thought a chaise with him and Miss I—— so much more desirable that it was a pity to miss the chance, so after a little debate Mr. M—— went up to the door. I stood below, and heard the following conversation. "Mr. K——." "Yes."—"I am sorry to disturb you, but Miss C—— is here."—"Well, sir, and what then?"—"She wishes to know if you could take her home with you."—"What do you mean, sir?

are you mad? I never heard of such a person as Miss C—— in my life.”—I flew up to Mr. M——, and we both retired in some confusion. He desired the waiter to explain the business, who told us that Mr. K—— “came in quite *tipsy* last night, and would *swear* finely at them all.” If he had said this before I should not have made the mistake. As it was, I felt quite glad to hide myself in the coach, where I found some very interesting fellow-travellers—an old lady in widow’s mourning, and a young one whose face was turned from me. We waited some few minutes, and I heard some one say, “only let me see her once more.” The door opened, and a very sweet-looking young girl presented herself, the very picture of grief and despair. The old lady tried to speak, and burst into an agony of tears. The other cried too, and I was so forcibly reminded of my own recent parting with you all, that I accompanied them with all my heart, and from that moment we seemed to be friends.—I felt quite anxious to know the cause of the deep sorrow in which these interesting people appeared to be involved. The young one seemed to be trying to whisper comfort to the elder, who endeavoured to speak on general subjects, and I dare say was vexed that she had not been able to restrain herself before strangers. She told us she had a son in the army, who had been severely wounded in the late action, having been carried off the field with seven wounds, but his life was spared when many other officers around him had fallen.

These ladies were evidently persons of superior

minds, as well as high cultivation ; but I wanted not that to enforce my respect and attention. I felt "in the venerable presence of misery," and would not have given a look that was not in unison with their feelings. In crossing the water they were both sick and frightened, and I was able to be of some service to them. I waited at the inn till they were a little recovered, and then I could not help saying when I took leave, "I wish I had a house to ask you to, &c." The old lady rose from her seat, and with all the warmth of an Irish woman, gave me her hand and said, "kind, good young lady, fare you well, and may God bless you !" The tone and manner affected me, and I found myself at Mr. K——'s before I had once thought of what I was to expect there. The kind welcome of the servants a little cheered me, and I entered the room where Mrs. K—— was sitting with the children. She never raised her eyes from her work, nor did she speak one word. I "hoped she was well"—and she muttered "very well"—and perfect silence ensued, for the children seemed afraid to move or speak to me. I flew up to my room ; it was quite dismantled ; and all about seemed to partake of the desolation of my mind. I recollected that I had a message for Mr. I——, so I put on my hat again, and almost ran down to his house. Their kindness re-assured me, but when they began asking about the friends I had left, to my great surprise and vexation, I burst into tears, but I recollected that I had not tasted food since very early in the morning ; so I ate a biscuit and took some wine, and was myself

again. I told them of the reception I had met with, and how it had chilled me. "Yet," they said, "you must have been prepared for it, you know her so well." I said, "well, I must go and take my part in the pantomime." "What a mercy it was that I had such a natural flow of spirits!" they said. I am sure I had need have all they fancy that I have, to bear and forbear, and "having done all to stand."

Yours, &c.

LETTER XXXIII.

TO THE REV. E. T. V—

I too should particularly like to know what would please you. I am sure, I thought I did a most magnanimous thing when I put my own cares behind me, and tried to amuse you. "Do I suppose that you want to be pestered with all the people that I happen to meet in a stage-coach? Do I not know that my own history is what you wish to hear?" Why really, I fancied you must have heard enough of that for the last month, but as your appetite seems to "grow by what it feeds on," I had better go on presenting myself and Mrs. K— in every possible variety of shade and colour.

I may talk upon paper, but I am now many hours, I might almost say days, without hearing the sound of my own voice. Who would take me for the same Miss C—, who at G— was not expected to be silent for five minutes? I do assure you my talkative powers are but partially given. To some few people

I can "talk a little," but to sit up and prate like a magpie to every body that comes in my way, is what I neither can nor wish to do.

I have been a good deal amused to-day by a letter from Miss H——. I find I have afforded some amusement to her wise and learned brother. You know the fancy that Mr. K—— once took into his head, that I was secretly in love with this gentleman. Well, he walked over to call at I——, while he was at home. He wanted to hear something of an Italian master, and much to his annoyance they would talk of nothing but me. "They had seen me and I was well." He "was glad to hear it," but as I did not happen to be the most interesting person in the world to him, he tried to turn the subject. Still however I was introduced again, and finding he could not get rid of me he took his leave. When he got home, his sister explained the whole by telling him of Mr. K——'s extraordinary sagacity, which made him laugh heartily. "If he had but known it before, he would somehow or other have contrived to look pale and interesting when my name was mentioned, but as it was, he sat like a post, merely saying "Yes and no, or did she? &c. &c." Is it possible that Mr. K—— can have extended the mistake to *him*, or does he fancy that I pine away in secret, and so thinks to forward my wishes? How could he ever take up such an idea? I should just as soon think of falling in love with a Greek folio; and, for all his sauciness, I must say that Mr. H—— is quite innocent of any attentions to me that could be fairly so construed.

I wish *you*, yes even *you*, were as clear from any guilt of this kind, I mean with respect to the Miss C——s. The world has given you to one of them, and you ought to remember that she will be the last to see her unfitness; and the first to think that where every body sees a motive there must be one. Every thing will concur to deceive her, while your eyes are completely 'shut to her danger. I am treading on very delicate ground, and shall most likely incur your displeasure; but, if I may deduct one atom from the heap of human misery, I ought not to hesitate in trying to open your eyes. I acquit you of any intentional error, but you *do* err from inconsideration. I began this subject several times when I was with you, but my courage failed. I felt that my motive was open to misconstruction, and now I blame myself for suffering selfish feelings to guide me, when the good of others was in question. I may speak of both these young women, for the eldest every one thinks loves you more than is consistent with her plighted faith. She does not love the man for whose happiness she is accountable: and why does she not? You walk amongst women as if they were so many icicles. You seem to think it impossible for them to love unless they are asked, yet there are but few capable of the platonic intimacy which you take for granted, and such intimacies are *never* proper.

You forget that, while a man has a thousand subjects to occupy his mind, one important object fills a woman's: (I speak generally;) it is the grand prevailing defect in their system of education, a root of

bitterness from which springs the most exquisite misery. "They must know that you are not at present in a situation to marry." This has little to do with it. You are single, and no man can depart from the common usages of society, and particularize any woman with impunity, not even a *married* woman. I may appeal to your own experience. "But what do I wish you to do? give up your intimacy with this family?" By no means. Only take care that you are perfectly understood. I leave you to contrive the means; but, depend upon it, this is a positive duty, however much it may be made a matter of pleasantry among men. I dare say you will find some way to explain yourself. Emily told me that when she was every day and every hour expecting you to make her an offer, you cured her by "wishing that you could see her well married." All persons are not so easily cured.

And now I suppose I may have done. I may sit still, and expect the storm of wrath, that will burst on my devoted head for all this wise preaching. You may as well lay aside your thunder, for I shall not heed it. Miss H—— has made me laugh even at my own peculiar misery. She says, "I cannot help being a good deal amused at Mrs. X——'s wishing you to bear the ill-temper of Mrs. K—— for her husband's sake. I can't, for the life of me, see the force of the obligation she would impose, or why *you* should. What is Mr. K—— to *you*? If he thinks proper to let his wife devour his peace and comfort, instead of giving her what she wants, a good horse-

whipping, why let him, and he is a fool for his pains ; but I can't see what business he has to draw any one else into the mire that he *chooses* to remain in himself. For my own part, if the woman had twenty angelic husbands, possessing every virtue and charm under heaven, I should consider myself fully justified in leaving all these saint-like creatures to their fate, the very first opportunity I had of bettering myself." Such is *her* view of the subject. She will not allow Mr. K—— any merit. She desires to hear no more of him, and is "quite sure he is a fool." I certainly think he might sometimes act differently, but we none of us know what we should do in peculiar situations till we are tried. With this very *new* observation I will conclude.

Yours, &c.

LETTER XXXIV.

TO THE REV. E. T. V——.

My dear friend,

Your letter found me not "harassed by surrounding friends, and disturbed by their attentions," but alone, in the cold stillness which succeeds to unusal exertion of mind, in the relaxation of the nerves which follows their violent tension.

I had tried to overcome *myself*. I had tried to screen this poor woman from exposure to her husband, and I had succeeded ; but I had subjected my own motives to misconstruction and blame, and I had sacrificed my own interest, or rather my situation ; but

I believed I had done what was right. Be that as it may, I had no more to do; and I sat in mournful contemplation of the dreary future. Never had I felt more conscious of inward rectitude, never had I acted from more upright motives, yet I wanted some word or look of approving kindness and encouragement—"I looked for some to have pity on me, but there was no one, neither found I any to comfort me." Your letter came—"surrounded by friends and attachment"—and the contrast of our situations struck cold upon me. I was yet ashamed of the selfish feeling, that would not allow me to rejoice in the happiness of another. At another time perhaps I might, but *now*—it stood too strongly contrasted with my forlorn and desolate condition, with the deep and perfect solitude of the heart. I could only feel that my misery was not softened by the balm of participation.

There are moments in our lives, (at least in *my* life) when, from the pressure of existing circumstances, the realities of our fate fix themselves more strongly upon us; when all the "fretful stir of life" seems suspended, that we may pause in mournful contemplation of the past, in fearful anticipation of the future. Long years of hopeless suffering seem spread before me, casting their deep shadows on the present and the future. Yet sometimes, in my better hours, I am thankful for it. I remember how soon my heart is filled with earthly objects, how devoted it is apt to be to the creature, how unmindful of the Creator; and I bless the merciful hand which has thus early

blasted every hope, wrenched me from every tie, and forbade my forming any other; and then, again I feel a capability of happiness—but it is all well—a few more struggles, and I shall know it beyond a doubt.

Thursday.—I think I have brought myself to a conclusion on the other side; and being fairly dead and buried, you may very reasonably hope for a release. I would not have you, however, make too sure of it—my ghost may haunt you still. But I must be serious, for I am about to tell my story. I will be as brief as possible, for I am tired of it myself. —I believe you know that once, when Mr. K—— expressed his fears that I should never be able to bear my situation, I assured him that no circumstances, of mere unpleasantness to myself, should induce me to give it up. I have kept my promise, though he thinks I have not. After my return from G——, I observed a change in the conduct of Mrs. K——. She was careful not to treat me with rudeness before her husband, but in his absence she was worse than ever. Every kind of persecution that her ingenuity could devise she put in practice. I will not weary you with a detail of these petty arts, which after all in a great measure failed, for my nerves were strengthened by my holiday, and I was able to bear a good deal of tormenting. I only saw her at meals, and as my duties were light, and I was perfectly equal to them, I considered that the present uncomfortable-ness was better than the anxieties of a new scene of action. At length, however, the conviction was forced

upon me, that I could not conscientiously say, that I was able to do my duty by these poor children. They were made to take part with their mother, and really tutored by her to insult me, and set my authority at defiance, even in the school-room. I was puzzled by her ceremonious politeness before her husband, but it was explained one day by the children in conversation with each other. "*Naughty* papa said he would not let mamma live here if she did not behave better to me, so mamma said she would, but she told them that I was a very bad wicked woman, and they must try to make me go away."

A great deal more was retailed. You may imagine how much I was shocked, but I did not notice it in any way. I could not teach children to disobey their mother. I might have appealed to Mr. K——, for at length her behaviour was so outrageous that she put herself completely in my power, and I will not say that I did not feel tempted to expose her shocking conduct to one, who had never in the slightest degree provoked or returned it. But I thank God that better feelings succeeded, and I have veiled her conduct from her husband as carefully as if she had been my dearest friend. She knows this, but it has not for a moment changed her purpose. I found that, during my absence, she had acquired such an ascendancy over the minds of the children, that I could do nothing with them. I never saw any thing so deplorable. They were taught to say and do whatever was malicious and insolent. I could have taken them to their father, but his interference would have pro-

duced no lasting effect. After mature consideration, therefore, I could not but admit that the path of duty was plain before me ; so with a heavy heart, I wrote a note to Mr. K——, in which I simply expressed my determination to give up my situation, of which I begged to give a quarter's notice.

To Mrs. X—— I wrote in explanation, wishing her to understand that I had not given up my post because it was a disagreeable one, but because I could not perform its duties. In answer, she “begged to assure me of her high esteem for my whole conduct, cordial friendship, respect, &c. &c.” The next day, she went on a visit to some ladyship, where I dare say this all vanished “like the baseless fabric of a vision.” Whether it has “left a wreck behind,” I shall know when she returns.

Mr. K—— spoke to me on the subject of my note in sorrow and surprise. “He thought,” he said, “I had been more comfortable lately ; but he could hardly expect me to keep my resolution.” I had pre-determined not to enter into any explanation, because I must have spoken of his wife ; so I simply said that the children, I thought, would improve more under another person. Since that, he has asked my advice about them. I did not scruple to tell him that I thought a school the most advisable. “They shall go then,” he said, though in sending them away, “I shall lose all the pleasure of my home.”

Mrs. X—— is not yet returned. I endeavour, sometimes with success, to hope that, having acted

conscientiously, I may confidently trust that the Father of the fatherless will provide for me.

Ever yours, &c.

LETTER XXXV.

TO THE REV. E. T. V—.

My dear Friend,

More than a month has passed away since the event which I detailed in my last letter, and all around me is silent. Every one is bustling in his own concerns, and no one can see the eating care that lies buried in my heart. I look about and cannot see any quarter from whence help can come. Mr. C— wrote a short time since to convey a proposal from Mr. S—, whose wife is dead since I saw him last. I was to wield the sceptre of authority over servants and children. Many privileges were annexed, and Mr. C—, supposing that I should immediately close with such terms, desired me to write to Mr. S— himself, and tell when I could come.

I confess I did not feel over and above delighted with being so very easily consigned over, however I had nothing to do with that. I wrote directly to Mr. C—, begging him to convey my rejection of this proposal in as civil terms as possible; and to *him* (Mr. C—) I explained my situation, and said also that I could not so far transgress the common rules of propriety as to take up my abode in the house of a widower, especially when there was no other female to sanction my presence. I wrote very briefly, very

simply, and very gravely, taking care that my rejection should be as clear and positive as it was civil, and there I thought was an end of it. No such thing. Mr. C—— has “thanked me for showing him, that the dignity of conduct and delicacy of mind, which imagination loves to associate with the female character, does really sometimes exist, &c. &c.” I have three sides brim-full of such pretty things.

I am afraid you will cry with Mr. Coleridge “I’m *very, very* sick.” I spare you; and pray, do not suppose that I am ridiculous enough to bedizen my plain, and I hope simple character, with the shining ornaments which he bestows. I only aim to walk straight forward, yet it would seem that there is some extraordinary merit in this. But thus it is. People are always over-rating, or under-rating you, as poor Captain C—— said of Mrs. X——, “her friends are always either all angel or all devil.” I draw but one conclusion from this business, that the kind feeling and consideration shown by Mr. C—— for my present situation will always claim my grateful remembrance.

I would not wish you to mention this circumstance, when you write to our friends. It would only be laying me open to advice. They would all jump to a conclusion, which perhaps Mr. S—— is as far from intending, as I am from wishing. It is a subject on which I neither give nor take advice. I am perfectly aware of all the arguments that might be brought forward to induce me to give myself this remote

chance, but my friends must excuse me from sacrificing all my self-respect to oblige them.

I am reading a book, in which I expected to find very little pleasure, and I have found a great deal. It is the *Memoirs of Mr. Cecil* by his wife. There are some letters, which may perhaps not do him much credit as an author, but I am sure they reflect honour upon him as a man and a husband. They have convinced me that I had totally mistaken his character. I verily thought he was one of those men, who sit up to be worshipped, like a three-tailed bashaw; and I find all the proofs of chastened affection and tender friendship. After having been many years married, he complains of her for occupying his thoughts in too exclusive a manner; yet he must have had some of the sternness for which I gave him credit. He laments that he has so much *bore* in his composition. I am sorry that you left the "Remains" behind you. I had pleased myself in marking several passages that I thought would correct the impression you had taken up. The man of taste could not have been offended, and the christian minister might have been benefited. The mind of Mr. Cecil was so liberal and enlightened, and there is something in his manner of treating serious subjects which has peculiar power to sooth and comfort me. His letters are more interesting to me than all the raving nonsense that Rousseau ever imagined, but perhaps they would not charm you now.

Do you keep your simplicity of taste in that magic circle which benumbs while it charms? Is it possible

that you can really love that world which seems to me so cold and joyless? Has it allurements of which my inexperience has kept me ignorant? I know no other enjoyments than those of the *heart*. I never imagined any in the *world*. Surely it is that blighting atmosphere where all the fairest blossoms of our nature wither, where the warm affections are chilled or refined away. But I am talking of what I know nothing about. I sit here in perfect solitude, and rail at pleasures which are out of my reach. No one ever entered life with greater fear and horror of "the world's dread laugh" than I did; and when I "dwelt among my own people," the prominent feature of my mind was, a desire to reign in the hearts of *all*, good, bad, and indifferent; but since I have seen that *my* world is composed of creatures weak and fallible as myself, who judge of each other from outward circumstances, and whose opinion is therefore perfectly distinct from the approbation of an upright mind, or the favour of infinite mercy, I have learned to undervalue its applause and look beyond its censure. "All very fine," you will say, "and very easy to write; and besides, contempt for the opinion of the world is very unbecoming in a young woman, and more especially in one who is dependent on the suffrages and opinions of her fellow-creatures for a hard-earned subsistence." I am not likely to forget this stern reality in practice, if I ever seem to do it in theory.

When you gave me "Rose and Emily," I did not anticipate that it would be a last memento of a de-

parted friend. The author of it is dead. You have perhaps seen her death in the papers. Her husband spared me that shock. I have lost in her a tender, faithful monitress, and a correspondent whose letters had a peculiar power over my feelings. Her buoyant joyous spirit was so mingled with tenderness and gentle sympathy, that it never jarred in discord with mine, even in my saddest moments. She was taken suddenly from a world, with which I sadly fear she was but too well satisfied. Her friends had not the least apprehension from the slight bilious attack which confined her to her room, till three o'clock on the fatal day. A striking change was then visible on her countenance, and four hours of rapidly declining consciousness terminated an existence which made the happiness of all around her. It is a loss I can ill afford, and especially at such a time as this.

Farewell.

LETTER XXXVI.

TO THE REV. E. T. V.—

My dear Friend,

I do not shrink from your praise. It is very grateful to me; and I was in some measure prepared for it by the commendations of some good people here, who were glad that I had propriety of feeling enough to prevent my asking their advice, or consulting them at all on the matter, till I had done every thing. Their kindness to me deserved every consideration on my part, and therefore I never went

near them lest I should involve them in suspicion. My distant friends knew what I had done before these excellent persons who are on the spot. I gave you a very imperfect account of my *wonderful merits*, but indeed, if I had said every thing that I could say in my own favour, I should not have expected the degree of credit that I have gained for just acting up to my sense of duty. In the sight of man I may have done well in *bearing* and *forbearing* with this wretched woman, but with Him who knew the inward struggle, who saw the mingled feelings of proud disdain and discontent when all without was calm and patient, I fear the account is very different. There are few things that humble me so much before a heart-searching God as the praise of my fellow-creatures. I know that one feeling of perfect acquiescence in his righteous will is worth all that I have done.—After all, I doubt if I have much cause to be flattered by the surprise which you all show *because I have not returned evil for evil*. Surely the lowest follower of Him “who bore the contradiction of sinners” could not have done otherwise.

I don't know whether you perceive any improvement in my style of writing, but, since my last letter, I have attended the lectures of a travelling philosopher. Like poor Burns, I said, “go to now, I will be wise.” I sat up quite determined to know all about the moon, and the planets, and the earth; so, when I came away, I was not quite certain that my head did not turn round upon its own axis. One thing I certainly discovered, that the man was

an ignoramus himself, but he was miserably poor, so I thought it best to keep my opinion to myself. Besides, I have a fellow-feeling for all such people, so, when he dined here, I was at some trouble to prevent Mr. K—— from making the same discovery. I remembered the time when I sat up to be catechised at G——; and they all seemed disposed to pump this poor man. Mrs. K—— was confined to her room by a cold, and every body seemed to breathe freely, and talk just what seemed agreeable. I talked as much as I could, and made the conversation as general as possible, to save the poor man, in return for which he informed me, and the company, that “wit was a *passion* that is more agreeable in a mistress than a wife.” Being unfortunately neither wife, wit, nor mistress, I could not appropriate the compliment; at the same time, I am not quite sure that the man did not take me for the mistress of some one of the elderly gentlemen present.

I did not purpose, when I began, to tell you all this nonsense, but I wished you to know that, at the lecture, I met Mrs. X—— for the first time since her return, and she took the opportunity of paying me the most marked attention. When I entered the room, I saw her seated at the upper end, “towering above her sex,” receiving the homage of all the people about her, who bow down to a fine house and carriage, and hate her in their hearts. I saw no vacant place, and I stood a few moments in the crowd, contemplating her countenance, always full of character, and now expressive of profound contempt and haughti-

ness. As the people separated to secure their seats, her quick eye turned on me; she immediately rose and came down the room to me, led me up to her seat and placed me beside her; and then, she said a great deal which I am not going to repeat, but in conclusion she begged me to consider her house as my home, when the time came for my leaving Mr. K——, till I met with a situation that was perfectly agreeable to myself; and she politely added that, “for her own sake, she had only to hope that the time would be distant.” This kindness was a very seasonable help. You have no idea of the weight it has taken off my mind. I seem now as if I had some resting place, and though I should be very sorry to be obliged to avail myself of her kindness, yet I am most thankful to her, and the kind Providence whose instrument she is.—When I write again I hope to have something of my future plans to tell of.

Yours, &c.

LETTER XXXVII.

TO THE REV. E. T. V——.

My dear Friend,

I will just indulge myself in telling you of one of my negotiations. Do you remember that fine house upon the hill that overlooks the town? You may perhaps recollect being told that it belonged to Sir H. C——, and that it was uninhabited? Well! since that time it has been taken by some very rich people. They want a governess: Mrs. X——

spoke to them of me; and on Monday I was invited to dinner at six o'clock. Every body told me of their splendour and riches, and every one seemed to think it was a most advantageous prospect for me. Now, I have had experience enough in these matters, to know that their riches might not administer to *my* comfort, so that I was not much dazzled by the accounts of them. At the same time, I had a great desire to settle in this neighbourhood, on account of the intimacy I had formed with the I—— family, so in this perplexity I sought counsel of Him who has promised to hear the prayer of faith. I mention it, because I never had so remarkable an answer to prayer. As soon as I had implored the guidance of the Holy Spirit to direct me how to act, and to show me the path which would be best for my eternal interests as well as for my temporal good, I felt no more anxiety. My mind was perfectly calm, and I felt assured that my way would be made plain before me.

About five o'clock on Monday, I set out to walk through the snow to this splendid mansion. I was ushered into the drawing-room, where I found Mrs. T——, a very pleasing woman, who received me with great kindness and cordiality. There was a timidity and nervous trepidation about her whole manner, which surprised me till I had seen her husband. I sat with her some time alone; at length dinner was announced, and as I rose to accompany her, she said—"I *do* hope you will agree with Mr. T——, I will do every thing I can to make you comfortable."—I had begun to hope till I saw him,

and then I soon understood that he was in very deed lord and master, and she was the very dust of the earth.

He was already seated at the dinner table, and desired us both to take our seats as quickly as possible for he had waited long enough for his dinner. Now I thought *we* had been waiting for *him*, and Mrs. T—— ventured to say that he was later than usual in returning home, and she had been quite faint with staying so long. He was graciously pleased to “wonder what business women, who staid at home and did nothing, had to want any dinner!” I thought I had never seen such a bear, however I said to myself, “let me not judge hastily, he is hungry and out of humour:” so, after eating voraciously, he began to be what he called agreeable. “So ma’am,” he said, addressing me, “I hear you determine to leave Mr. K——. He is a good sort of man enough, but I understand she is a terrible tigress.” This was a subject on which I did not choose to converse, and as he seemed to expect an answer, I said that I left Mrs. K—— in about a month. “So you don’t choose to tell tales out of school—well, I like you all the better for that; and to tell you the truth, I don’t want to hear them—quite enough to manage one’s own wife—but this I *will* say, that if Mr. K—— would take a leaf out of my book, I’ll venture to say he would soon cure his wife of all her devilry.”

He went on in this way, with very little interruption from either his meek and timid wife or myself.

The children came in to my relief. He took occasion to observe that they would have been very well, if they had not been spoiled by the folly of their mother; "but all that you will correct," he said: "I wish them to be well educated, for they will all have very handsome fortunes, and I wish them to make a figure in the world."—After going on some time in a very magnificent way, thinking, I suppose, that he had sufficiently astonished my weak mind, he proceeded to "my business," as he called it, the pounds, shillings, and pence.

Oh! it is impossible to give you any idea of his grossness. If he had been driving a bargain at Smithfield he could not have been worse. "I tell you what, ma'am; I think your terms very high; you must lower them down to mine; and then I shall give you twenty pounds more than I ever meant to give, or than you have any right to expect." I was perfectly calm and self-possessed; and as I had been preparing to come away, I said, "Then, sir, I believe I have no occasion to trouble you any further. I wish you good evening."—"What! you won't come down? Now, take my advice, take a week to consider. No *woman* is capable of coming to a right judgment under a week." His wife pressed near and said, "only consider, Mr. T——, how very little it is for your income."—I thought he would have knocked her down. "Do you think I don't know what I am about, Mrs. T——? Don't I know that I can have a governess sent from town for half or a quarter of what I propose; aye, many that would jump at such

a chance? I am not going to be bamboozled, I promise you." I again made my parting courtesy, but he followed me into the hall, assuring me that I did not know what I was about, and repeating that he should expect to hear from me in a week, and "then, if I am not mistaken, you will see your own interest, ma'am, too well to refuse." I said, "I will have the pleasure of writing to Mrs. T—— on Monday next," and I came away.

I scarcely knew the ground I walked on, till I found myself at the door of this house. Mr. K—— had sat up to hear the result of my visit. He closed his Bible as I came in, and I thought I had never seen any thing so mild and benignant as his countenance. The scene I had left made me feel as if a holy radiance was about him, and I thought "how long will it be before I shall meet with another to whom the every day events of life are sanctified?" I told my story almost choking, and I can now only wonder that I was so calm in the presence of this mighty bashaw, who, I understand, frightens every body.

I suppose you need not be told that my note on Monday will only contain a repetition of my refusal. Mrs. X—— seems to wonder. "The terms are certainly very low," she says, "but Mrs. T—— is so anxious for me to come, and she is herself so amiable!" I could not say that the salary was no object, while my dear sisters are in some measure looking to me for help, it is of consequence to me not to

diminish my resources, although at present no other situation offers.

Farewell.

LETTER XXXVIII.

TO THE REV. E. T. V—.

My dear Friend,

I am anxious to answer your last letter, because I see that you are indulging in regrets that are unavailing. You mourn over the disappointment of your hopes, and the unpromising appearance of the future; and so do I; but I cannot think it would have been better if we had never met; at least I am sure it would not have been better on my side. I own I do sometimes feel a quick sharp pang, when the idea occurs to me that I may possibly be the cause of your not settling in life; but then I strive to banish this thought, for it is useless to mourn over the past. I am willing to live the present moment, and not anticipate future evil. I am bound to say that your kindness is so great a support to me, that "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you." You found me in the waste, a poor, dejected child of misery. You sought me only from the tender pity of your heart; and the best feelings of our nature prompted your attentions. That they have ended in uniting me more closely to you in spirit, is for me to regret, but it is on *your* account; for you are certainly very much mistaken when you fancy that my lot might have been better if I had never known you.

It would indeed have been different ; but you are got very far in the land of visions, when you settle me down to some hapless mate of your own forming. In the first place, and setting aside all other preventing causes, what introduction have I into society ? And when I am there, seated at the corner of the table in my governess capacity, just allowed to eat and hear, what chance do I stand of attracting the notice of beings, who, as your friend K—— says, only look for a person to admire.

I think you may pacify your conscience on this matter, and I promise to tell you all the brilliant offers that I refuse, and if, at the end of the chapter, you should find yourself a Benedict notwithstanding all your prophecies—why then, as you have conjured up all the evils of Pandora's box in my proper person, I must contrive I think to let you taste a few. Of this one thing I am sure, that I should stand a much better chance of happiness than you would. You *have* imbibed, and you are imbibing, habits and tastes which would militate against domestic happiness. Some years ago you might have been happy with me in retirement, but your taste is not simple enough now. You have been fed on high sauces, and so, after the novelty of the state was gone by, you would be looking back on the luxuries of Egypt, and wondering how you could have forsaken them for a land of such fallacious promise. You have been accustomed to look to so many for entertainment, that the powers of *one* would be quite inadequate to the demand ; and if you were taken all at once from your present way of life, I am sure you would be misera-

ble. In time perhaps, you might be made to bow your neck to the yoke, and be content to live in "calm domestic quiet," but it would be a work of time. I suppose I am doing service to some future lady by this lecture, for I shall certainly be dead and buried, long before you become so reasonable as I have represented you in the end.

Well, I must have done with these airy visions, and proceed to the dull realities of life. I have engaged myself to a sober quiet family who have six children (just your sum of human misery. I was quite passive in this business, leaving the kind friends, who had troubled themselves for me, to take all preliminary steps. I dread any thing new, but I shall be very glad to leave this house ; for indeed I have suffered very much ; and my spirits are so worn with the constant trial, that I think I could not bear it any longer. Yet I have some advantages which I shall miss. I have the whole evening to myself, excepting a short interruption from one of the servants whom I am teaching to write ; and she so bewails my *lonesome* state, and seems so inclined in pity to prolong the time of my doing penance with her, that I expect she will offer me her society, such a terrible idea has she of being alone. She little thinks that it is the only enjoyment of the day ; and when I have trimmed my little fire, and swept the hearth, there are few that I envy.

But I had forgotten my new friends. Both Mr. and Mrs. H—— came to call and settle with me. He was prime speaker. He "hoped I should come,

but he felt that I ought to be told that they lived in perfect retirement, and kept no company whatever; could I bear such seclusion?" I dare say I looked very blank, but I was pleased with the good sense and good humour of the speaker; and I considered too that, if I did not close with them, I should be pestered again by that Mr. T——, of whose bargain with me I told you: for, strange to say! Mrs. X—— tells me that they are so determined to have me, that they will not take my refusal, because they think that in the end I shall be brought to terms. Would you believe it? every body seemed to wonder that I should refuse to go to live in such a magnificent house! What has that to do with me? The man is fully bent on keeping his money to himself, or he would have been ashamed to offer me such a pitiful sum, but it was so odd that he should "happen to be pleased with me!" Very few, it seems, are so honoured; and his wife had no doubt that he would advance his offer. I heard this with dismay, for I have an unconquerable repugnance to go there, so I was the more ready to close with Mr. and Mrs. H——; and they went home quite satisfied it seems with their day's work, for they called on Mr. I—— to thank him for his recommendation.

Yours, &c.

LETTER XXXIX.

TO THE REV. E. T. V—.

My dear Friend,

I am going to my new residence sooner than I expected. Mrs. H—— is quite unequal to the management of the children, it seems. She complains of being ready to faint all the evening; so, upon this representation of her case, it has been agreed that I shall leave this place at the end of the quarter. I had accepted the kind invitation of the I—— family to stay a little time with them before I encountered the new faces, and I still mean to do it, for I really feel that I want to recruit my strength. Mr. K—— has been trying to persuade me to give up this long promised visit—"for fear it should make Mrs. K—— angry! there was already," he said, "a great prejudice and dislike on her part to the ladies of the family, and they were so excellent that he always regretted it, and now, if they received me, he was afraid she would be very angry." I said "I should be sorry to do any thing to displease Mrs. K——, but if she was so unreasonable as to be displeased on such an occasion, I could only be sorry."

I hope I have not done wrong; but really I cannot see why a woman's evil temper should be suffered to spread its baleful influence so far and wide, and destroy the comforts of such poor creatures as I am. It seems enough for her to have tormented me in the house: why should she curtail my enjoyments when I get out of her way? I cannot help thinking that this

is only another specimen of the error of Mr. K——'s conduct with respect to his wife. On some occasions he is roused to exert his authority, but in general he yields to her on every point. He does not maintain an even course. He loses the dignity of his own character by suffering her to rule, and thus he fosters her evil nature. There can hardly be a wider breach between her and this family than there is at present, for she does not visit them; she barely tolerates the presence of their excellent father, because he once saved the life of one of the children. Pray tell me if you think I have done wrong. I think I can do no harm, for she would not suffer these young ladies to visit her as long as they continue to make any profession of religion, and I hope they are never likely to give up that. I am sorry not to conform to every wish expressed by Mr. K——, but, in this case, my health really seems to stand in need of the brief space, which I had destined for a little free breathing, before I go to my new abode.

I very much regret that it is in the country, by the river side. Yes, indeed I do: I am not sufficiently enamoured with the banks of this romantic stream, to sit down and watch its ebb and flow, and "hold converse with nature's charms," and wish for nothing else. I like the "human face divine" infinitely better. I dare say you are all amazement, "shocked, disgusted." I insist upon it that you believe, notwithstanding, that I have just as much taste for the sublime and beautiful, and just as high a relish for the beauties of nature, as *you, your very self*; and if I were independent, I should be just as sublime a

character, and sigh as much after green fields, and shady groves, and falling floods; but being as I am, kneaded into the common mass, obliged to conform to the humours and habits, and tastes and caprices of every body that I come near, not suffered even to "think my own thoughts," I do confess that I had much rather see a variety of men and women than all the trees and floods and hills in the county. There was a time when, from the influence of early habit, and simplicity of feeling and taste, I could hardly have believed it possible that I could exist any where but in the country. I looked on every town as a little Gomorrah, "a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours," where it was impossible to inhale any thing that would not corrupt and contaminate.

Well, it is not my taste or opinion that is changed, but my circumstances. I still love the country: "I never form a wish but there I place the scene:" but my sources of innocent and pure enjoyment are cut off, and I have learned so to estimate the powers of my mind, as to fly rather to "the haunts of men" than the shade of groves. I must say that I do enjoy "the fine full flow of London talk." There seems to be a stagnation of ideas in this place, which does not promote conversation. People are either afraid of committing themselves, or they have nothing to say. I declare I often find that I have furnished talk and ideas for the whole party.

I began this letter before I left Mrs. K—— and I finish it now in the society of these kind friends.— My poor Sophy is just at present in a very critical

situation. I think I told you that she had been freed from that engagement to a fellow of a college. How it was done I never very clearly understood; but she is now tempted to accept the offer of a man entirely unsuited to her, in order to free herself from the miseries of dependence. Her letter has pierced my very soul. In her reasoning for and against, she unfolds the trials she has to encounter in her present way of life, and tries to persuade herself that she cannot suffer so much in matrimony. Alas! it will only be misery of another kind. Dear, unfortunate girl! let none presume to blame, till, like you, they have drunk the bitter dregs of misery, and bowed a high and lofty spirit to the galling yoke of labour and sorrow.

Farewell.

LETTER XL.

TO THE REV. E. T. V—

My dear Friend,

I want a little leisure, and a little light, and a little quiet, and then I might possibly find some enjoyment in writing to you from my new habitat. You are one of the proofs of my identity. I really am in such a new world, and every thing about me seems so extraordinary, that I might almost doubt whether I am the same person, but that I find myself writing to my friends as usual. I did as you advised me, while I was at D—. I gave myself up

to the dear enjoyments of my friends, and my liberty, and took no thought for the morrow. Nothing could be more complete than my enjoyment. I was, every day and every hour, seeing and tasting the fruits of Christianity; indulged and caressed by the best women in the world. It is really beautiful to see the harmony and love that reign in their happy household. They are of that rare stamp of character that must be looked close into, before you can discover all their excellence. I am afraid both you and I should pass them over in mixed company. They are neither brilliant nor entertaining, but when at home in their domestic circle, it is surprising how *witty*, and *merry*, and laughable, we all were. The opposing current of human affairs seemed to pass over, and have no power to irritate or wound them. It is very refreshing in this wilderness, where there are so many like Mrs. C—— “having the form of godliness without the power,” to find some few in whom religion has her perfect work.

It is time to introduce you to this new scene that I am in. You would delight in its picturesque beauties. The house is in the midst of a kind of bay, surrounded by a barrier of high cliffs or mountains, clothed with wood, which is however broken by cottages built up its sides, and little patches of green where the sheep seem to hang, for it looks so precipitous that it is difficult to imagine how they can rest upon it. The river winds through this beautiful glen. It is not subject to the tide here, but is clear and ever-flowing, and in some places natural

cascades are formed in it, by huge pieces of stone that may probably have tumbled from the cliffs above. The house in which I am is surrounded by the forges, and by the cottages of the men who work in them. It seems hardly possible that a letter should find its way to me in this deep glen. I climbed half-way up one of the hills yesterday, to see if we were really shut in completely. There is one opening which admits a view of the town of L—— reposing in the valley, with the hills of Morven and the Welch mountains rising in blue shadow behind them ; but we seem to have nothing to do with any business but our own, and that makes a constant stir and bustle. I shall never forget the sensation I felt when I first heard the great hammer of the forge, and my dismay at discovering that it would be going all day and all night. I thought it would be quite impossible to live in such a jarring world, but I am already quite reconciled to it. In looking down upon this place from the hills, all beautiful as it is by nature, one is almost tempted to quarrel with the iron forge, which is continually vomiting out its thick clouds of black smoke, as if on purpose to sully the fresh green of the hills, but, I don't know how it is, the whole effect of the scene is not displeasing to my taste.

I ought to have told you that I arrived here about a week since. I was received with the utmost cordiality and kindness by Mrs. H——, who took me into the dining-room, where round a blazing fire of forest coal, the heat of which is beyond any thing I ever felt before, stood my six pupils. As far as I

can judge, they are as complete children of nature as you would expect to meet in such a seclusion. This hamlet I find belongs to a church upon the hill about two miles off, the minister of which and his wife are very intimate here. They are intimate also with the kind friends with whom I have been staying, so that they were prepared to treat me with cordiality. I too was prepared to like them both, and I really think I never saw more agreeable people. He is a faithful minister of the flock committed to his charge, and she appears exactly what a clergyman's wife ought to be. When they went away, she gave me a very cordial invitation to the vicarage. I thanked her; she said quickly, "yes, but you *must* come; you must not shut yourself up entirely with these children, don't *begin* so," she whispered. I wonder what else I am to do with so many. I dwell in a corner of the house top, and all the children are with me always.

I am waiting for books, &c. from C—— before I can bring them into order; in the meantime, my head is teeming with half-formed plans to arrange and methodize my time. They are entirely given up to me, so here I sit, with all the weight of government upon my shoulders. If you could but hear the noise they are making! I insist upon their being quiet in school-hours, but when they are over it would be cruel not to take the restriction off. I am naturally very fond of children, but I like little ones. These are all such healthy looking hardy creatures that at present I feel no interest about them. Their mother is a very kind-hearted woman, anxious to do her duty to them, without exactly knowing how; indeed there are

few mothers who do, and a governess ought to educate the mother before she begins with the children ; but I am expected to undo the work of eleven years. Well ! I must try, and be thankful for the respect and kindness with which I am treated. Oh ! very thankful I am, that I am not pestered with accomplishments, not required to make *them* the business of their education.

Yours, &c.

LETTER XLI.

TO THE REV. E. T. V—

My dear friend,

I am afraid you must be content with hurried scrambling letters, for I see no chance of your getting any other from *me*. I have only little *bits* of time before the children are up in the morning. I mourn over the long evenings that I used to have entirely to myself at D——, but there is nothing else to regret. I look back and shudder at the remembrance of what I endured there, and I wonder *now* how I could bear it. I feel more indignation, when I recollect the conduct of that poor unhappy woman, than I ever did when I was with her ; I think of her as little as I can, and I never allow myself to speak of her, but I sometimes dream of her and wake in a fright. It will be sometime before I shall recover the effect on my nerves which her temper occasioned.

I have quite overcome my dislike to the noise of

the forges. I only lament that they make us all speak very loud ; for there is no chance of being heard without it. Every exertion of the voice, whether in singing or speaking, is done in a key very much above the usual tone. People have very different ideas of harmony, or rather of music. Some think the singing of canary birds in a cage very delightful. There were several in a small breakfast-room at Mr. K——'s ; and he used often to laugh at the despairing looks which I cast at them when they all began their piping. When I came away, it was one of my minor rejoicings that I should leave the canaries behind ; and when I got here, I began to think the perpetual din around me was worse, but I now prefer infinitely the dull heavy sound of the great hammer to the shrill piping of birds in a cage.

I was very much gratified the other evening by the manner in which Mr. K—— was spoken of. Our good clergyman said he had never seen any thing so simple, so pure, and even sublime as his life of faith.—

I have now got my school-room into some little order. I have some difficulty to preserve myself from the sin of favouritism. My boys are fine little fellows, and one is particularly charming to me, little rebel as he is, there is so much originality about him. I am in a great fright about the eldest boy who is at school. His mother wants him to be taken away, and put under my care, and his education to be finished by me and the new curate. I think I have not mentioned this sprig of divinity before.

He is just fresh from Cambridge, and I can see that they are in some fear lest I should open my mouth, and swallow him up. I do hope this fear of him will deter them all from bringing him so much in contact with me, as this plan of his giving one of the boys lessons must necessarily do. I must confess that at present there is not I think much danger to either of us. I will leave you to judge what impression such a character must make upon me. During his first visit, the children sang a nursery song, at which our good vicar laughed heartily. I saw that the new curate looked unusually solemn, and he afterwards took upon himself to reprove Mrs. H—— for suffering her children to sing a song! He offered to teach them a hymn, or to set one of the hymns they knew to a tune; so the children were all drawn up in order before him. After many flourishes on his part, which perfectly amazed the poor children, and made *me* take out my pocket handkerchief, they were to begin; but instead of raising a note, my little rebel Edward, who has a very quick perception of the ludicrous, burst out laughing, and the rest followed. For the life of me I could not scold them, I only “hoped they would do better another time;” but really I could hardly help laughing myself.

Now I beg you will spare me any lecture upon the subject. I would not laugh at any body for the world, but I assure you this gentleman is on such very good terms with himself that there is no danger whatever of my giving him any mortification, even if he knew all I had said. Only think what injury this

man will do to the cause he thinks to serve ! He makes religion unlovely by the littleness of his mind, which would bring every thing down to its own narrow capacity. Now, some people will identify *religion* with this man. It is well that there are some such families as the I——s, with whom I have lately been. One of the daughters has been staying with a cousin at L——, who lives in all the splendour of twelve thousand a year, yet she left her to come and spend a few days with me. Mr. and Mrs. H—— were so kind as to invite her on my account, for they had no acquaintance with her themselves. I think the society of this dear girl a very high privilege. Never have I seen a mind so spiritualized, so devoted, so humble, or one that might with so much propriety be called holy. There is such an habitual shrinking from every appearance of evil in her conversation and manner, such a gentle purity of conduct, that you seem to be in another atmosphere when you are near her.

Of what infinite consequence to our own souls it is, to be surrounded by holy influences ! I am glad you can see the danger of a residence in M——. To me it seems so appalling, that I really think, if I could take any steps to prevent it, I certainly would. Our safety is in flight. In this state of fearful trial, where all is so rapidly fading from us, it is not surely for *us* to venture within the influence of any temptation. "Received in every party !" Oh ! my dear friend, come out from among them. They have their portion in this life ; but will *you* forget that you are of

them who are appointed to stand, as it were, between the dead and the living, to stay the plague of sin ; will *you* drown the sense of your important duties in the empty pursuits and insipid pleasures of the world ? God forbid ! but you cannot tell what you may be led to do, when once within the vortex. And then, for what are you going into the mouth of temptation ? —for the chance of marriage with a poor exhausted creature who may never—but this is vain reasoning ; it is of very little comparative consequence whether, in this world, we are ever united ; only let us so live that we may meet in eternity. You will not mistake me, and fancy that I undervalue the happiness of being with you. You well know that it is the cherished hope that has brightened many a dark and gloomy hour ; but I would resign every hope, I would go mourning all my days sooner than expose you to a trial, which may be to you “an occasion of falling.” Neither do I think, in case of your succeeding in your views, that you would find it an easy matter to change your way of life, and realize the quiet and rational mode of living which your judgment *now* approves, even if the inclination should remain.

Farewell.

LETTER XLII.

TO THE REV. E. T. V—

My dear Friend,

Well ! it is a difficult thing to please you all. Since I wrote to you to wonder at your silence, and tell you my fancies in consequence, I have received a letter from Emily. She had never answered my last. I wondered and grew uneasy ; but however, as you had so clearly proved that nobody had any business to be anxious about any body, I thought I would be quiet ; so I reasoned myself out of my disquietude, let her alone, and thought to be sure I was quite right, and doing the thing completely ; and so it seems I have, for she is seriously angry. Here is a long letter full of nothing but animadversions and reflections, on my “ want of affection,” “ change of character,” &c. “ Time was, if she had been so long silent, I should have concluded that something was the matter.” Very true, but it has been very clearly shown that I have no business to think or feel, much less to act ; and being reduced to this happy condition, it is rather hard that I may not enjoy some of the advantages of nonentity and insignificance.

I could bring forward many reasons for not writing to any one. In the first place I have nothing to say. There is nothing in this place to give one an idea. My days pass away in such dull monotonous regularity, that every one of my faculties seems in a

state of stagnation. There is nothing to give the mind an impulse. The only variation of events since I wrote last has been that I have ascended to the highest point of ground in the country. I looked round upon an amphitheatre of a hundred miles in extent, mountain heaped on mountain, and the river wandering through the woods in such a circuitous course, that one might almost fancy it unwilling to leave the scene of so much beauty. We drank tea in the pavilion, and I read there the account of Lord Nelson and Lady Hamilton having visited this spot, and pronounced it the finest view they had ever seen. I read with more interest a sonnet which Bowles had written on the spot, in which he calls on the lonely stranger to trace, like him, "the windings of his distant way," and think of those "who far beyond yon mountain range, with rising hope or sad solicitude, remember thee." I felt as if I had met with an old friend. I was alone. The children and servants only accompanied me. So I sat and read this sonnet, and watched the sun as it set behind the black mountain, and was very sentimental and sublime, sighing for some one to admire with me, while my little Edward galloped backwards and forwards on a stick, wishing for nothing in all the world but Tom's kite, "to fly in such a nice wind."

I do not wish myself a child again, but there is something very delightful to me in the sports of children. They are so light-hearted, so innocent, and their frolic mirth is so cheering, when they keep the peace! Oh! how can people check them? how can

they destroy these brilliant joyous moments that never can return? not that I think the enjoyments of life are limited to childhood. There are flowers in every path, but we lose the art of plucking them.

How enchanted you would be with this country! The woods are chiefly oak, and I never saw any thing so beautiful as their golden foliage was in spring, mixed with the bright green of other trees. But you can never come here, for I am sure I don't know what I should do with you in such a din and smoke as we are in. Yes, I would take you out of this foul "pestilential congregation of vapours," up to a region of peace and harmony. You should climb the church hill, and when you were half way up, you should turn and see L—— in the valley, and the river lingering in the woods, and the forge vomiting out its thick black smoke, blasting all the green foliage around, or else ascending in a spiral form as if it would sully the purity of the deep blue sky; and then you should go on through the woods till the fine tower of the church appeared, and you would say it was the prettiest village you had ever seen; and when we got to the white-washed vicarage, we would peep over the sweetbrier, and the pastor would come from his books, and take us up to "Madam," as he sometimes calls her, and we should talk, and forget all the clatter and bustle of this "work-day world." This is a little dream, which I may as well bring to a conclusion, for it is not very likely to be realized while you are three hundred miles off.

By the bye, our good vicar has quite made himself

sure of there being such a person as yourself in existence. He laughs at me for my anxiety to have the letter-bag opened, as if it were not the most natural thing in the world to care about the post in any place, and more especially here, where it is the only thing that serves to remind us that there is a land beyond this little nook. If I had been aware of his jumping to a conclusion so speedily, I would not have shown any desire about it, for I do not like to be driven to the admission of the truth whether I will or no. I have no cause to be ashamed of you, but I feel that it is a subject in which "a stranger intermeddleth not." The other night, he was saying that he thought the ladies in this neighbourhood ought to give him a piece of plate for bringing so many young curates among them, for they never would let him keep one. "Now pray," I said, "don't have another like this, do bring some personable sort of being, and not such a stick as this." "Will you promise to have him if I do?" "Oh, yes, if I like him." "Now, you little sly thing," he said, "as if I did not know that you care nothing about any of them! There is but *one* that you would give a pin to see." "Indeed, you were never more mistaken in your life; there are many men, and women too, that I should like to see." This I could say with all truth.

Ever yours.

LETTER XLIII.

TO THE REV. E. T. V—.

My dear Friend,

It is well for you that you do feel an interest in our good pastor and his wife, for I have nothing else to treat you with. Do you remember an account of a clergyman who ventured into the Forest of C—— to give spiritual instruction to one of the colliers? I say *ventured*, because it was a perilous thing to go among them. They lived in a state of perfect heathenism. They had no place of worship. They were not given in marriage. They literally “did that which was right in their own eyes,” and submitted to no laws but of their own forming. Well! the good clergyman repeated his visit, drew a little flock around him, laid their case before government, and obtained a grant of land, and subscriptions to build a chapel.—Our vicar was this minister, and I do not know a more interesting sight than it is to see him at his Forest Chapel, surrounded by his own people—the spiritual father of every soul among them. “No one,” said one of the old colliers; “ever thought us worth coming to look after before.” —“The desert shall blossom as the rose.” The prophecy is fully accomplished here, and it is well for our amiable pastor that he has this spring of consolation, for he has many mortifications to endure from the high and mighty of his own parish.

You call upon me to condole with you on the marriage of Miss C——, or rather on the loss you

sustain of her society. Really it is a very pitiable case, particularly as you are so certain that the atmosphere of London will detract from the charm of her manner. I wonder you can think so. Can any thing be more improving than the society and conversation, "the fine full flow of London talk," that she may meet with there? Mrs. R—— had lost nothing of the simplicity of her native village, by being transplanted to its environs. She preserved the same taste for simple pleasures, the same indescribable fascination, as they say she had when she "ran wild," as she used to call it, for the first twenty years of her life. Her intercourse with the world had not robbed her of one attraction. The polished ease and graceful sweetness which she had acquired was only an accession of charm. Yet I would not find this world so satisfying, I would not give my soul up to it as she did, even if I could "dwell among my own people," and live beloved and idolized like her. I would not be so tempted to "call this barren world sufficient bliss." I will venture to say that there are few who enjoy more exquisitely than I do, the society of those I love, and the unwearied exercise of social affection; yet, in my happiest moments, I have felt, with a sort of secret complacency, the insufficiency of every thing here to satisfy the desires of an immortal spirit. Yes, I think I should certainly have good reason to be alarmed for my spiritual state, if I found that any thing here could fill and satisfy my heart.

I don't know how I came to wander so far. I

was going to say something on the subject of your flirtations. I am not to feel an atom of suspicion or distrust when I hear your ecstasies and raptures about these charming creatures. Well, I *am* incapable of any thought or feeling to *your* disadvantage, but there are some to my *own* which I will lay open before you. When I hear you praise other women very highly for qualities which I am sure I do not possess, if I do not cherish one thought of reproach towards you, I yet feel timid of my own powers ; and something like a doubt or question steals over me, whether I do not owe my power over you to absence. We see, alas ! so very little of each other ; our sphere of action is so wide apart ; we are so forced to look to others, for the enjoyment of the passing hour ; that I sometimes fear lest other associations of pleasure and taste should be formed, and the sympathy which once united us should be destroyed. Of this one thing I am very certain ; you suffer your imagination to run away with you with respect to me ; you see these charming beautiful creatures, with their buoyant health, and untried undiminished spirits, and you fancy, because I am absent, that I am every thing that I am not. But you are looking very grave, so I will have done.

Since I wrote this, I have received a letter from Emily which has agitated me a good deal. It seems that her health compels her to give up her pupils even before her marriage, and she proposes that I should take them, so that she may have the comfort of leaving her mother with one to whom she is so much attached. If this proposal had been made to me

before I came here, I should have acceded to it joyfully, but now it only perplexes me. It appears to me that I could not go without behaving unhand-somely to Mr. and Mrs. H——, who are so very kind and attentive to me. Then I might not succeed in pleasing the parents, and I should find it doubly hard to go among strangers again, after the tenderness I should experience from Emily's dear mother. The children too would craze me. They do nothing at the right time, and put nothing in the right place. Mine are bad enough, but they are obedient. I have *bought* my experience, and I am never familiar with them, (the two younger ones excepted.) Instead of being devoured with kisses every time that they think proper, I never suffer them to touch me. Emily's system is more amiable in theory, but it would not do for my practice. She is obliged to whip them. I have no occasion whatever to apply any bodily correction. It would take some time to engraft my plans upon hers, and I could do nothing without them. On the other hand, however, there are many objections here. The air is very bad; and then, I very much dislike the extreme solitude in which we live. Yes, indeed I do. It may do very well for you, and Lord Byron, and a few more such sublime creatures, to come and "hold converse with nature's charms;" but for *me*, I had rather hold converse with men and women; and the little opportunity I have of doing that, will be curtailed in winter, when my walks to the vicarage must be given up. What would you have advised I wonder?

Yours, &c.

LETTER XLIV.

TO THE REV. E. T. V.—

My dear Friend,

I had decided the matter, and almost forgotten it, before your letter arrived. I am sorry to differ from you in opinion, but the more I think of it, the more I am confirmed in my own judgment. It is true the society at G—— would be more pleasant, but I very much question whether it would be more desirable in the best sense of the word. I feel daily more and more, of what infinite importance it is, that the influences around us should be favourable to spiritual improvement. Now nothing can be less so than at G——. Only look for instance at their way of spending the Sabbath. The young men having no employment, are lounging about at every house that will admit them. Emily and I, in observing how completely our time was frittered away, have both lamented the impossibility of our making it a holy day; and if that is not done, I really believe that no advancement can be made in the life of the soul; now here, there may be more profession than reality, but no one can deny that God is acknowledged in all their ways.

Mrs. H—— is habitually low-spirited and nervous. I see her only at meals, which we all take together, so that I have very little of her society. Indeed her health would not admit of her seeing much of the children, so that I am dependent upon Mr. and Mrs.

O—— for society, and the hill and the distance makes them not very *come-at-able*. They have taken a fancy into their heads, that their company is not desired in this house by any one but myself. The vicar was very much hurt, on the last return of this family from C——, by their reiterated praises of some preacher they had heard. This was not altogether a right feeling, but I could not help seeing that there was something indelicate in their praising another minister for the very qualities in which he was deficient. There is a great deal of tenderness and amiability in *his* character, but I am more entertained by his wife's. There is a perception of the ludicrous, and a slight tinge of satire, in her composition, which he wants to make him amusing as a companion.

I dined yesterday at the vicarage, and met the governess who was my predecessor here. She told me she had found it the most intolerable situation she ever filled, and at last was obliged to resign it from the total loss of health and spirits. Mr. O—— said “she wanted some of my *gas*.” Perhaps she had not been so schooled by other infinitely more disagreeable things. I was in amaze to hear all she told me. She says she was made a complete slave. Now their manner of treating me is very different; but Mrs. O—— thinks they were prepared to treat me with great propriety, and to think something of me, from knowing that Mr. K—— had said, “he would willingly double my salary, if he thought it would induce me to remain.”

Mr. and Mrs. O—— are going very soon to a

watering-place, and they invite me to go with them. I might make my vacation now and go, but there are a thousand obstacles in the way. The expense of the journey ought to be an objection to me, but I should be at no other it seems, for they would take me as their guest. Let me know your opinion of this wild scheme.

I have been alone for some time, and Mr. O——, after the lecture last night, told me he should not preach here again for a long while. “I shall send my curate,” he said, “that he may bear the full fire of the preachers they will have heard at C——.” This same curate bears it most magnanimously. He has such a comfortable portion of self-complacency, that it never enters his head to imagine that any one’s preaching can be preferred to his. I have not often mentioned this gentleman, yet I have had a great deal of amusement in unravelling him; and I think I have done him some good, for I have laboured to divest him of some of his self-importance, and have done my best to convince him that he is in reality of very little consequence. I laugh at him, and with him, and I believe he thinks me the veriest heathen that ever was born. Mrs. O—— says, if ever they mention me before him, he is silent directly, and if obliged to give an opinion, he draws out, “yes, she is very *lively*,” and he pronounces the word *lively* as if it included every sin in the catalogue. There is a person to whom he speaks freely, and she tells us all again. He thinks that both Mrs. O—— and I are in a very dark state, having no religion at

all in us.—“Well,” said this lady, “I’m sure I thought Miss C—— very amiable.”—“Oh! I grant you, ma’am, she has amiable manners, a sort of varnish that she has got in the world, but I always suspect those ladies who are like her.” Mr. O—— was quite in a fury at his speaking in much the same way of his wife. “So kind as she is to every body,” he said.—“Well, and so am I too, I beg leave to observe.”—“Oh *you*,” said he, “but you know you have plagued his heart out.”—But now, are you not shocked to hear of my being such a creature? Well, just now I am in too good spirits to care much what he says.

Yours, &c.

LETTER XLV.

TO THE REV. E. T. V——

My dear Friend,

I am just as I was about my plans for the sea. The family at the parsonage have had company for some time past, and I have had no chance of arranging any thing about it. I drank tea there with the rest of the family the other evening. They have the two brothers of Mr. O—— staying there. One is an old bachelor and the head of a college. Surely there were never two men so unlike as he and his brother; the one, accustomed to high society, and hardly able to exist in the country; the other, thankful to be out of the world, and content in humble

retirement. The Doctor has never visited his brother since he has been in this country before, and he was lost in amazement, and anxious to know how he contrived to live with "positively no society." There are a few great people in the village, who called upon the poor man, and so enabled him to vegetate during the time of his probation there, but more than once he yawned and evinced every symptom of weariness during the evening. "And have you really no intimacy with the D——'s?" he asked; "They are people of some consideration in the world."—"Very possibly," said Mr. O——, "but we are not in the world. I cannot afford to give dinners. They are very welcome to come and look at us as often as they please; and if they won't do that, I can't help it." He is gone now, and Mrs. O—— says, it will be some time before he comes again. Never was any one so tired of his sojourn amongst us.

The other brother is the oldest of all, and he married a sister of our Mrs. O——, who was an elegant blooming young widow. She sacrificed herself for an independence, and for a father to her three children, for she was married at sixteen, and left a widow with three children soon after she was twenty. It is pleasing to see how contented and happy she is. I thought of that shocking woman, (Emily's cousin T——) when she left her work to look for her husband's spectacles, and then gave them to her little boy, to "take to dear papa." He is a fine little arch fellow, with whom I got very intimate by helping him to make a dirt pudding in the flower-border.

He is the only child of the O—— family, and his father is evidently very much in fear of being called an old fool for being so fond of him.

Mr. and Mrs. H—— do not as yet know that I have any idea of going to the sea. I was made rather uncomfortable last night by a lady who was drinking tea with us. She observed that the lodgings at B—— were very scarce and very dear. Now I should feel very uncomfortable to occasion much expense to the O——s, for I know that their income is small. In fact, though Mrs. O—— says that I should be their guest, and incur no more expense than the cost of the journey, I cannot help wondering that she should take upon herself such an additional burden, for she is generally remarkable for her prudence and economy. As to taking such an expense upon my own shoulders, I certainly should never think of such a thing. I am afraid it is one of those forbidden pleasures to which I ought not to aspire. I will write as soon as any thing is settled.

Yours, &c.

LETTER XLVI.

TO THE REV. E. T. V——

My dear Friend,

My scruples about going to the sea merely for pleasure were removed, a few days after I wrote to you, by a very opportune fit of bile, which as usual oppressed me with languor and disinclination for every exertion; still, if it had not been for the

management of Mrs. O——, I should have given up all idea of the journey. I was amused to hear the way in which she brought Mrs. H—— to acknowledge that some change was very desirable for me, and then, as if the idea had only just struck her, she proposed my joining their party. Mrs. H—— has no finesse about her, and though she did not enter very cordially into the plan, yet she had nothing to say against it. Mr. and Mrs. O—— appeared very much delighted. She repeated her first plan, saying, “remember you must pay for your own journey, and when you get there, you are to consider yourself my guest.” So we parted. I like open honest proceedings, and it went against me to pretend any thing about this scheme; but I fear my good Mrs. O—— likes a little of this trick and finesse.

It is settled that we are to follow them in a week. By *we* I mean myself, Mrs. S——, and one of the Miss I——s, who is a very great invalid at all times, and I think only kept alive by the constant care and skill of her good father. Mrs. S—— is a widow of five and thirty, who seems to me to choose to be an invalid, that she may establish some claim to be interesting. Perhaps I judge her hardly, but it is said that she does a great deal of mischief in the parish, by flattering poor Mr. O——, and telling tales of all those who are likely to obtain his favour. I have only seen her once or twice. The day before they left, when Mr. O—— wanted to persuade her that she ought to pay me so much a day for all the good I should do her, she looked at me I fancied with no

kindly expression, and said, "I remember the time when I was as light-hearted as Miss C——, and if she should *ever know* what sorrow, or care is, she will be a little different from what she is now." "And do you think I have never known any sorrow?" I asked. "I am quite sure you never have," she said, "you may have fancied some, but you have never known any real trouble."

I could not help musing a little on the difference of opinion between us. Here is this good woman, living among her own friends and connexions and in the enjoyment of a comfortable independence, fancying herself authorized to indulge in low spirits, and to be discontented, because she has lost a husband, for whom while he lived, I am told, she never seemed to care. She fears too that she is going into a consumption, of which there is no symptom whatever but in her own imagination. I always feel that if I *can* keep my troubles to myself it is a duty to do so, and I am not fond of spreading my woes abroad, but I feel not the less, amidst all my gaiety, that I stand alone in the wilderness of human life, separated from "all with kindred consciousness endued." My society I know gives pleasure to others, I am glad that it does, but theirs in return offers but a poor equivalent very often for the exertions I make. I will finish this at B——, when I get to the end of my journey, for I suspect I shall not have much time. I am fully expected to entertain all the party I find; so I shall only exchange one labour for another. Well, if they are not disappointed I do not mind.

B——. I am afraid you will not be very well pleased to find me grumbling at Mrs. S—— till just the conclusion of my letter. We arrived here at a very late hour on Friday night, after being benighted on the mountains. I had the management of the journey; Mrs. S——, who from her age and appearance certainly ought to have taken our guidance, refusing to do any thing, observing that “she went for her health, and those who had such gay spirits were the fittest to bear fatigue.” The poor woman seems quite exasperated with me for amusing Mr. and Mrs. O——. When we were within twelve miles of this place, I had great difficulty in changing a note, and but for the accidental circumstance of an English farmer being at the inn, I do not know what I should have done. He asked what could have tempted us to choose such a road, in which he said we had encountered all the difficulties, and escaped all the beauties of mountain scenery. He gave me a most enchanting description of the other road, which is by the Devil’s Bridge; yet, do you know, Mrs. S—— persists in saying that she will return the same way, because she “does not like *new* ways, and has no wish to be a heroine, and break her neck over the Devil’s Bridge!” Did you ever hear any thing so ridiculous! I am almost sorry that I concealed the real danger we were in for the last stage. She was leaning back half asleep in the chaise, and I knew Miss I—— was suffering from real fatigue, so I said nothing, but we had a surly Welch driver, and a pair of tired yet unruly horses, and no moon; but

there was light enough for me to see, that we were winding up a steep, with no fence on one side; and as one horse was large, and the other small, the harness could not fit both, and consequently the driver had but little control over their movements, and I saw that a few paces on one side would precipitate us into the chasm below. Tired as I was it would have been a great relief to have walked, but I dreaded alarming Miss I——, who could not have done so. I sat therefore in silence waiting the event, and I felt very thankful to the kind Providence which brought us in safety to this place. I have no time for any more.

Farewell.

LETTER XLVII.

TO THE REV. E. T. V——.

My dear Friend,

You accuse me of colouring too highly when I tell you of the grief which Mr. O——'s Foresters expressed at his taking leave of them. I do not know that I did. I believe they are very sincerely attached to him. You will remember it is a peculiar case. *They* derive importance from *him*, and *he* has become known by his exertions for *them*, so there is a bond of union between them, a cord which cannot easily be broken. I never sought to conceal from you his many mortifications and disquietudes, arising from other parts of his extensive parish. He has certainly as many if not more than

most other ministers, and his natural susceptibility makes them very galling to him, and sometimes I fear he suffers his own irritated feeling to govern him instead of christian principle. For instance—I think I told you how much I was vexed with Mrs. H—— for enlarging so much upon the merits of other preachers in his presence. Well, he has never been very cordial with her ever since; and yesterday he told me that he intended to give up his lecture in our hamlet. Now Mr. H—— built the chapel for the benefit of his workmen. They attend extremely well, and therefore what reasonable plea can he have? He admits that he is displeased with Mr. and Mrs. H—— “because they like every other preacher better than they like him.” I was so surprised at this proof of temper, that I was quite silent, and lost the opportunity of questioning him on the business.

But I have been still further surprised, and even shocked, since my arrival here. You know all my scruples about joining this party, and you know how they were overcome by the offer of Mrs. O—— to pay my expenses whilst I was here. The last time that I saw her before she set off, she said, “now let us understand one another, you will pay for your journey, and when there you are our guest, I will undertake to feed you, &c.” The first morning after breakfast she told us in general terms what our expenses would be weekly for board and lodging. I felt this as a sort of indelicacy to me, but I said, or thought, to myself, “I should feel more comfortable if I paid my share, but I shall offend her if I offer it.” How-

ever in a minute or two she spoke in a way that I could not misunderstand, and my bill is made out and paid weekly. I feel so ashamed when I offer her the money, that I declare I have never looked at her; so that, whether she blushes or not, I cannot tell; but I fear, from other symptoms of character that have been unfolded to me, she is more likely to enjoy the success of what, to say the best of it, is a very mean trick. I am more shocked than I can describe. Is it possible that there are people who can take up religion as an empty profession, just to suit their convenience, and to be laid aside when it does not suit their purpose? I should be afraid to say that I was any thing but a christian of the lowest order, but surely I should as soon have thought of committing a robbery, or incurring any other breach of the moral law. Perhaps however I am more severe in my judgment because I am the sufferer, for I believe I must go without clothes next year. The expenses are very high, for we have the best lodgings in the town, so now I am in a pretty *mess*.

Yours, &c.

LETTER XLVIII.

TO THE REV. E. T. V—

My dear Friend,

I may be wrong, but I cannot help thinking that you are particularly ingenious in tormenting yourself. Why should you imagine that, when I said the desire of visiting foreign lands was

not a desirable feature in a husband's character, I meant to cast an imputation upon you? I certainly said, with all truth, that if my husband proposed to leave me for a year or two, in order to go upon his travels, I should not feel myself very much flattered, but why should you imagine that more was meant than met the ear? I marvel at your sensitive habit of taking offence on such slight grounds. I do indeed think that nothing can be more lamentable, or more to be dreaded in any near connexion, than this unsatisfied wandering disposition. Men are more liable to it than women, because, as Dr. Johnson has said, they cannot hem pocket-handkerchiefs. I recollect too that I said, in observing on Mr. and Mrs. O——, that men of affectionate hearts, moderate talents, and common minds, are much more likely to make their wives happy, than some who rank in a much higher class. This is all that I remember offensive in my letter, which it seems met with a *warmer* reception than I expected; for, though I do not suspect you of keeping my letters, yet I did not suppose that it was ever necessary to throw them behind the fire, lest they should kindle a flame in your breast a second time. I always wish you to tell me when I offend, because I cannot have any chance of mending my faults without knowing them. In the present case you will pardon me for saying that "the reciprocity is all on your side." In plain words, I think you were too sensitive, and perhaps a little out of humour at the time, and so it is all to be imputed

to me ; but you see I shift the burden, and you may as well let it rest where it does.

But let me turn to another subject. I never before understood the great blessing of employment. I really have been sometimes led to think that half my miseries arose from having so much to do. Surely I shall never think so again. We all intended to be so much amused here, that we should not want occupation, so we brought no needle-work. I hoped to read, but none of the rest of our party have any idea of looking into a book for amusement, so here we are, yawning away our days in all the pains and penalties of idleness. After breakfast we go to the beach, look at the bathers, pick up the shells, throw them away again, come home, lounge upon the sofa ; and in another hour, find ourselves walking the same way, doing the same thing, and meeting the same people, just as vacant and idle as ourselves. I would not continue to live such a life for the world. I have learnt to pity those people whose fortunes enable them to seek only their own amusement. There is a lady lodging in the other part of this house, who excites all my pity and a good deal of my interest. She had the misfortune to be born an heiress. Her parents died when she was young, and her guardians, in consideration of her large fortune, thought it incumbent upon them to take care that she should be perfectly accomplished ; but the other parts of her education must have been terribly neglected ; and as she is by her marriage settled in a retired part of Wales, she has no one to whom her accomplishments are of any value. According to her own account, she has no

neighbours who create sufficient interest in her mind to make her feel any pleasure in the display of her acquirements, "and so," as she says, "what is the use of them?" She is very beautiful, and her husband is a very kind and indulgent one, but he has sufficient interest in his grounds, and his dogs and horses. He wishes her to be happy, but he seems quite at a loss what to do to contribute to her happiness, so her days pass away in all the languor and listlessness, of idleness and discontent. She has evinced a great fancy for my company, and I laugh at her, and lecture her, and advise her to turn away her housekeeper, and order her own dinners, and even help to cook them, rather than do nothing.

Mrs. S—— is exceedingly annoyed at the favour which this lady has shown me. You would scarcely believe it possible. I really stared at her in unfeigned amazement, when I perceived how much this short-lived honour has excited her spleen. All the time of dinner one day, she threw out sundry inuendoes upon people who courted fine or great folks, as in the plenitude of her own vulgarity she called them. I felt so innocent of this charge that I never imagined she was shooting at me, till she grew out of patience, and "supposed I was finely set up now this lady and her carriage were at my command." I only laughed at her ill humour, which had an unhappy effect upon her, for she was even more exasperated than before, and took various methods of humbling the pride which she fancied Mrs. T——'s distinction of me must give. One of them, in the course of that even-

ing, I permitted her to try, without being aware of the experiment till afterwards. She was about to walk to the warm bath, and it rained, and she desired me to put on my things to accompany her. I was surprised at her unceremonious manner, but hailing it as a proof that the cloud was dispersing, I very readily obeyed her summons. Would you believe, that she afterwards gave me to understand, in the coarsest manner, that she had made use of me, because, the night being stormy, she had not liked to take the liberty with either of the others; and “persons in a dependent situation must learn to be at the call of others, and it might do them good to bear a little hardship.”

Can you conceive any thing like the disposition of this poor woman? It is really fearful to see what absolute dominion our evil tempers and passions may acquire by indulgence. All this time she fancies herself a religious character, and poor Mrs. H—— is constantly humbled by the account which the O——s give of her superior piety. Only fancy my situation if she was in Mrs. H——’s place. It never seems to occur to her that her religion is to be brought to bear on her own conduct. She will talk in general terms of her exceeding sinfulness, but she will not bear any thing in the shape of reproof, even from her spiritual pastor, and she is unsparing in her remarks upon his “failings,” as she calls them, the chief of which in her estimation is conversing with *me*, which she calls “being led away by the world,” because I make him laugh.—Mr. O—— one day said my spirits or conver-

sation were quite as entertaining to him as a *play*. "You may well compare them together," said Mrs. S——, really turning yellow with bile and envy, "I for one would as soon hear one as the other." I was ready to say with poor Desdemona, "am I that thing?" I could not help thinking, "se ehov these christians *hate* one another."—I am very much in fear lest my disgust to some religious professors should lead me to throw away any thing that belongs to real religion. That God has spoken to man, appears to me the only thing of real importance in this life; the only thing that ought materially to arrest our attention here; and never may the misconduct of my fellow-creatures induce me to identify their inconsistencies with religion itself.

Farewell.

LETTER XLIX.

TO THE REV. E. T. V——.

My dear Friend,

I shall not be at all sorry to see once more the rosy faces of my pupils. I am heartily tired of having nothing to do but to amuse myself. I am sure I hope the pleasure-seeking people have better materials than I have to work upon, or else they are very much to be pitied. At any rate they may be spared the constant exhibition of such ill humour as I have to contend with in Mrs. S——. She is perfectly enraged with me on every occasion. I sometimes think that she would have no insupera-

ble objection to another husband, notwithstanding all her professions to the contrary. She talks indeed much and often of all her affections "being in the grave with her poor dear partner," but why should she be so angry with me for attracting other persons' notice? I must say that the idea of putting myself in comparison with her never entered *my* head. She is a person of at least thirty-five, and then I have had all the advantage of better society than her birth entitles her to claim. You see at once that she is illiterate and vulgar. Now I have youth on my side, and I love literature, and if I may believe the judgment of others, I have what Mr. O—— calls a "marvellous gift of speech." So my vanity placed me above supposing that I could annoy Mrs. S—— by engrossing the attention of the few men that have come in my way.

Yesterday at dinner Mr. O—— announced that he had accidentally met with a Cambridge man, Professor L——, and that he would take tea with us. I made some little difference in my dress, which Mrs. S—— remarked upon. I laughed and said, "Yes, I have been ornamenting my person with great care; I intend to smite the Professor at once; I am determined to give him no chance of escape." As I gave utterance to this nonsense, I was seated on the window, which is very low, mending my glove; and as I lifted up my eyes to see who had knocked, I encountered the gaze of a very handsome elegant looking man, with a certain arch expression of countenance which convinced me that he had heard my badi-

nage. In another moment he was introduced to us as the Professor. Very great was my surprise, for I had really expected to see an old man in a great wig. After I had recovered from the little embarrassment, which the fear of his having overheard my foolish speech occasioned, I joined in the conversation, or rather I was led to join in it by the address of the Professor; and as I was the only one of the party who could sympathize with him in lamenting that we could not get English books from a Welsh library, we continued to talk, but I was hardly aware that he had talked more to me than to the rest, till he was gone. He had hardly closed the door before Mrs. S—— began, “Well, ma’am, I hope you are satisfied.” “By no means,” I said, “I want the Professor to remain here as long as we do. Only think of his going to-morrow!” Mr. O—— joined with me in lamenting it, and agreed that he was very agreeable, and sensible, and so on; and moreover he pleased me especially by asking Mrs. S——, what she could see to find fault with in my behaviour during the evening. She sat swelling with rage; and at supper he asked her why she was so silent. Then she burst forth, “Oh, sir, let those talk who are so fond of it, and that you are so fond of hearing: I am sure you don’t wish to hear any thing that such a plain person as I have got to say.”

How completely this poor woman’s unhappy temper has spoiled all our happiness! You may imagine that she has been quite my horror, for it was not always that my spirits were equal to the task of

laughing at her ill humour, and the utmost that I could do was to retire to my own room. Mr. and Mrs. O—— wished to keep on good terms with her, because her house is a great convenience to them in the parish, and she retails all the news, and all the opinions on the last sermon. In short, they are bound to her by many ties, so that they bore with her ill humour for the most part very patiently. Indeed she kept us all in fear. It was curious to observe what a damper she was to us all. When she entered, I became silent; all sounds of laughter ceased; Mrs. O—— worked with renewed earnestness; and poor Mr. O—— sidled off to the window or the fire-place, as if conscious that he had been detected in the very act of enjoying himself in her absence.

I have been politic enough not to express any opinion about the journey home, and Mrs. S—— having taken the whole management into her own hands, has at length decided to go the other road, to my great satisfaction, for now, instead of barren mountains and rugged roads, we shall travel through the most beautiful scenery in the world. I shall be glad to escape from this place, where I may certainly say that I have *bought* experience, for I have paid my share of our expenses to the uttermost farthing, not because I desired to do so, but because our hostess measured with scrupulous exactness the due proportion of ways and means. We even paid for Mr. O——'s servant, who was brought entirely for his master's convenience, and who did not even save us the charge of being waited upon by the people of

the house. I carry home wisdom for the future, and I congratulate myself that no expression of surprise or dissatisfaction has ever escaped my lips. In my manner there was perhaps some difference from the confiding warmth which I used to feel before I was enlightened, but I had no wish that it should be otherwise, I had no desire to play the hypocrite.

Yours, &c.

LETTER L.

TO THE REV. E. T. V.—

And so you really think me so very apt to misconstrue your letters or your actions, that you are obliged to write if you are ever so much disinclined ; and you really felt yourself constrained to manufacture a little show of kindly feeling ; and a precious little it is. I think if I had been a polite young gentleman writing to a lady, I would have found something better to tell her than that I had *every thing* in the world to make me happy ; especially when you know that the lady in question has been foolish enough to believe that *she* was necessary to your happiness. Now when *I* am making out my account, and building my little fabric of worldly comfort and happiness, I always consider that I have very few materials ; and in particular, that I am deficient in one very important part of the foundation ; and wanting that, I ascribe the more merit to myself for being as I am ; so I contrive to keep on very good terms with *myself*, you see, though I do not with *you*.

But, to be serious, I grieve very much to find that you suffer so much from depression of spirit. But you are not in this respect singular. Every worldly expectation leads the way to disappointment. Here is our pastor suffering the extreme of wretchedness from disappointed hope, because his Foresters received him coldly. He had been indulging himself, all the time he was away, in vain imaginations of the joy they would manifest at his return. He came, and they talked to him of nothing but his curate, and the excellence of the sermons he had preached during his absence. Then his poor curate is to be full as miserable, and with more just cause. He has fallen in love with a lady of some fortune, but he has no house. Whilst we were out he wrote to Mr. O—— for permission to take the curacy of the adjoining parish, where there is a good parsonage house. Mr. O—— is as open as the day; and the moment he had read his letter, he spoke of the request which he had made, wondered at him, when they could hardly get through their present duty—"the thing was quite impossible." I recollect now that Mrs. O—— said nothing, and he too the next morning was mute on the subject; and now, on my return, I find that the poor curate never received any answer to his letter, and concluding that he might make himself sure of the curacy was all joy and gladness, till he was thunderstruck by hearing that Mr. O—— had himself taken the curacy, or rather so managed as to receive the stipend while his curate does the duty. This is the literal fact, for he has never taken any

part of the duty ; the poor curate has it in addition to his other cares, and wanting spirits for the exertion, it quite overcomes him. Now I do not doubt this to be another of Mrs. O——'s clever tricks, and I must say I felt full, brimful of indignation when I heard it.

The moral of my tale is for you. I am trying to show you that other people have troubles as well as you. And why should you think that added years will only rob you of "the few flowers that still adorn your path?" They cannot take from you the only real and unfading hope. They cannot extinguish the light that "shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Is it a matter of regret that we have seen and felt the emptiness of all that this world has to give? Will it not lead us to build on "an immortal base," to welcome more readily the hope of joys that will beam for ever? I look back on the illusions of my youth as I do on the toys of my childhood. I have not a wish to recall them. I should like the untried buoyancy of spirit that we have at that age, but nothing else. I would not find the flowers of Paradise in this transitory scene, where all is passing from me. I would rather wean myself from it. I would rather muse on the vanity of human wishes, and this I have been doing ever since my return. If my summer ramble has done nothing else, it has taught me to welcome the seclusion of these hills, for I do not call them mountains now. I did not know how much I loved these children before, but my heart quite leaped for joy when I came within sight of L——, and thought of my little flock ; and I be-

came still more impatient when I drew nearer and recognised the old walk by the wood side, of which I had often been so sick.

It was a fine moon-light night, and I was set down about a quarter of a mile off. This place must be very beautiful, for after all the grand, and even sublime scenery, that I had passed over within the last day or two, I stood and surveyed it with fresh admiration. It seemed quite fairy land. All that is offensive to the eye by day, the smoky buildings, the discoloured foliage, the black forges, all was thrown into shadow, and the amphitheatre of hills, clothed with wood, broken here and there by cottages and sheep meadows, presented a scene that quite enchanted me. It was perfectly still too. The forges had ceased for some weeks ; so that all which I, in my sublimities, look down upon as proclaiming the noisy nothingness of man, was at an end, and there was no sound but the murmur of the river. I stood in admiration for some minutes, and then I came near and smelt *my own mignonnette* still fragrant. Did I ever tell you of my garden ? No flowers ever grew here before. I made the whole of it myself, and my flowers have been the admiration of every one this summer. I had some geraniums too, about whose health I had many forebodings, but I found them all in perfect order.

I knew it was lecture night, and, as I guessed, the whole family were at chapel, but refreshments had been provided in case I should return during their absence. I could not fail to contrast this with

my return last year to D——, when every thing had been made studiously wretched. Here it was evident that Mrs. H——'s kindness had been at work to make every thing as comfortable as possible for an expected guest. When the children came in, they really made the house ring with joy. I was very much gratified, for though I strive to make them happy, yet before I came they were so entirely unfettered from all books, and mental exertion of any kind, that I have had hard labour with them, and could not help having many fears that they would regret my return. I think they are the most innocent children I ever knew. Happily they have never been taught any thing with the idea of displaying it. How extraordinary it is that parents should not see the evil of the present system of education! Can any thing be more effectually calculated to destroy the very germ of modesty, than being in the habit of exhibiting themselves, and their musical acquirements, before a crowded circle of guests? These timid, blushing children have not so lost their natural modesty.

Farewell.

LETTER LI.

TO THE REV. E. T. V—

My dear Friend,

I am very glad that you have friends near, to cheer and comfort you at this dreary season. I sometimes sigh to be with my friends at these times of assembling together, but I am not unhappy. If I have few enjoyments, I think that I am useful. At any rate, I do not know what they would just now do without me. Mrs. H—— is in a most pitiable state of weakness. I feel much anxiety about her. When I look back on all the time that I have been here, I feel that I have much cause to be grateful to her. The last governess complained of her unkindness, and there used I find to be terrible commotions with them, but I have never had the smallest dispute with her ever since I have been in the house, and I believe she would grant me any indulgence but that of taking the children off my hands.

I sometimes lament that I should be entirely confined to her society, and that of old nurse, in these long winter evenings; but there is a great deal of shrewdness and quaint humour about this old woman, and in the absence of all other sources of enjoyment, she amuses me very much; only she is in such a terrible hurry to get rid of me when the children are up! She quite hunts them into the school-room, and if I attempt to leave them down stairs for a minute, she calls after me, "Oh, pray, ma'am, take your train up with you; for goodness' sake don't leave them here;"

and she pokes the poor things about with her stick, till they prepare to follow me: "there go, there's dears—take 'em all, ma'am, and the Lord help ye wi' um." It is well for me that I do not find the society of the children so intolerable as she does. She thinks the only pleasant part of our time is the evening when they are all safe in bed. Our coterie then would very much edify you. We hold a council on all the affairs of the hamlet; but what interest can you take in our politics? What do you care that Betty Protheroe is certainly going to marry Tom Knight, though her husband has only been dead a few weeks? You live in another sort of world, and may perhaps look down on us; but I, who am a philosopher, am amused to trace the same shades of character in all societies. One might fancy there was no distinction of rank here, to see the black men labouring at the forges, looking like nothing human; yet here is a woman too proud to associate with her neighbours, because her husband is head forge-man; another gives herself airs because her husband is advanced from the rolling-mill to the furnace, and so on; they have all their different degrees of rank and consequence. Oh, what a low-born thing is pride, which can flourish in any soil, and thrive on any nurture!

You tell me that Mr. S—— admits that Emily is very fascinating, but he does not like her. One might be tempted to ask, what he could possibly find to delight him, when he finds fault with every thing that constitutes her peculiar charm, every thing that

distinguishes her from the common herd of women. I suspected that they did not suit. The truth is, he is so accustomed to the artificial manners of general society, that he could not understand or appreciate her simple manners, and perfectly natural open character.

I have just heard from Miss G——. She has had a great literary treat. Coleridge has been staying with her brother. She says "he really does talk down hours to moments." I was delighted to hear that, from once being a Socinian, he has renounced his opinions, and is about to publish a defence of the Trinity. The deepest feelings of his heart appear to be called forth, she says, when he speaks on religious subjects. He has a son who inherits his poetical talents. She sent me a hymn of his composing, which breathes the purest spirit of devotion.

I have been reading a work lately which has made a deep impression upon me, Dr. Bellamy's "True Religion delineated." I felt as if I had only embraced the shadow of religion, and was an utter stranger to the substance. He proves that people in general love a God of their own imagination instead of the God whom the Bible tells of. The style of the book is perhaps not very engaging, but I think the author must be a sound divine. We are accustomed to hear from our pulpit, that "the children of God may be suffered to fall, but they know that they shall rise again; they may wander, but they are sealed for redemption; they are the elect;" and so on. I feel as if this was not wholesome doctrine; for while I hear

that I can be renewed but in part, I feel it an encouragement to rest satisfied in low attainments, rather than an incitement to press forward ; and not daring to number myself among the elect, I cannot take to myself the consolations which our minister bestows. I am often more inclined to say, “you have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly.”

Will you think me presumptuous in this criticism ? I think I would not speak in this way to any one else, but I can in truth assure you that I respect Mr. M—— exceedingly, and even admire him as a preacher of great power, and I know that his own life is the best comment on his doctrine, but he is a Calvinist, and much as I respect and love some who hold similar opinions, I am yet always sorry when he brings forward his peculiar tenets in the pulpit. I shudder to hear him search into the deep things of God, and with a bold, I had almost said a profane hand, draw aside the veil, and expose to view what God has been pleased to leave in doubt and obscurity. I am sermonizing at full length, you will say, but I feel that God must be my portion here or he will not be hereafter ; that there must be a fitness for heaven wrought in the soul even while we are on earth. May we both seek more earnestly the help of the Holy Spirit, to work in us this mighty change !

Yours, &c.

LETTER LII.

TO THE REV. E. T. V—.

My dear Friend,

You will believe that my first impulse on reading the account of your illness, was to write again directly, that I might have a chance of hearing from you very soon. After thoughts induced me to spare you, yet I confess it was not any consideration for *you* that withheld me, but a mere selfish motive. The truth is, I was studying to save myself the anxiety which the expectation of a letter would have caused me. I judged, perhaps without doing you justice, but from past experience, that you would not answer me before the usual time, consequently that I should be entailing upon myself a little age of misery. You are a man, and therefore I suppose must not be expected to know any thing of these fearful misgivings, and thick-coming fancies. It is only women who know what it is to have the heart wound up to agony every post-time, and to feel it sicken and chill, as they hear, like poor Corinne, "*il n'y a pas des lettres.*"

I fear this will look too like reproach, and I know you never mean to be unkind, but I am soon alarmed, and better able to endure a fearful certainty than suspense. Perhaps the dreadful state of this family aggravated my fears. Mrs. H— thought my anxiety was about my sisters, and she tried to comfort me. "Was not *she* expecting a letter from *her* sister, and did she look ready to sink when the letter-bag was opened, and there was no letter? No:

she did not doubt but that all was well, though she did not hear so." Alas ! I knew that her sister was at that moment a corpse. We concealed the sad news from her on account of her situation. The intelligence was first sent to me, and as I read the account of this sister, who was the youngest of the family, being cut off in the bloom of youth and health, I could not help trembling for all my earthly treasures.

Farewell.

LETTER LIII.

TO THE REV. E. T. V.—

My dear Friend,

I am now all alone in this old crazy house. Mr. and Mrs. H—— have been some time at C——, and I really think, if they do not come home soon, I must set off too. At night I am the only person who sleeps on this floor, the servants and the children are all over head. I am preparing you for a story, to which I beg you will listen with becoming attention, and never more laugh at me for being superstitious.

On Wednesday night (March 1st) I went to my room ; it was nearly eleven o'clock, but, having something to do, I did not immediately prepare to go to rest. At length, I began to feel the perfect stillness that prevailed around me ; I wished myself asleep, and began to hasten. I had only to say my prayers,

and I knelt down for the purpose, when, at that moment, I heard a low mournful sound. Strange to say, I was not at all frightened. I thought only of the children, and I took up my candle to go to them ; but the noise became louder, and I knew it was not the voice of any child. It was a cry as of one in deep distress. I cannot perhaps express to you the idea that it conveyed to my mind, but I felt convinced at the moment, that whoever uttered that cry was suffering the most bitter anguish of soul. I stood perfectly still, and listened whilst it began and died away four or five times, lost in wonder, but yet not sensible to fear ; till I heard a sound of persons hurrying down stairs, and in a moment my door burst open, and the servants came in just as they had jumped out of bed. They did not speak at first, and their florid countenances were so blanched with fright, that I did not immediately recognise them. My fears returned to the children. I was now sure that something dreadful had happened, and I took up my candle to go to them ; but the servants pulled me back, and as soon as they could speak, they asked me in a low voice “ if I had heard those dreadful groans.” They were awake by them. They described them as louder, and accompanied with deep sighs, which I did not hear. Indeed the distance of our respective rooms makes it almost marvellous that the same sounds could be heard in both places. After some time had elapsed, we took courage to go all over the house. We heard no more noises, but it was idle to think of sleeping. The greatest part of

the night was spent in watching, but nothing more occurred.

Well, I have not done yet. Since I began this story, Mr. H—— has returned from C——, and the first thing that the upper servant did, was to tell him all about our fright, and declare that she would not again remain in the house, if none but women were left in it. Mr. H—— made light of the matter, but as soon as she was gone, he confessed to me that, on the same night, and about the same hour, he was awoke by a strange sound in the room. You will remember that he was at C——, and he slept in the same room which Mrs. H——'s late sister used to occupy. He listened for some time to what appeared to him to be a person in very earnest prayer, which sometimes became the expression of remorse, and bitter anguish of soul. He was quite sure that there were no persons in the neighbourhood who would be so engaged at that time; and while he listened in wonder, the voice died away, and was succeeded by such sweet and soft music, that he could not help waking Mrs. H—— to hear it. It ceased immediately, but not before she had heard the last cadences. Now, Mr. M—— laughs heartily at the whole story. Mr. H—— says nothing. I beg you will write immediately, and let me know that all is well with you.

Ever yours.

LETTER LIV.

TO THE REV. E. T. V—

My dear Friend,

I have a perfect horror of pestering you with letters, so I am very glad to be found fault with for not writing. You will at all times find it very easy to stop my career, but it is the only way of communication left to me, and I am sometimes afraid of indulging myself too much in it. I could fancy that I was living on the outside of the world, if such a thing were possible, and only hearing occasionally by letters of what was passing within. Thus I felt when I heard of Emily's marriage, which it seems took place on the fifteenth.

I have no more wonders to tell you. We have had a birth and a death in the house since I wrote last, and my feelings have been very strongly moved in both events. I had quite set my heart on the poor sickly babe, who languished and wailed for nearly a month, and then escaped to its eternal rest.

I have had no time to write, for, in the midst of all our bustle and anxiety, nurse was seized with the gout, and the task of nursing her was by common consent turned over to me. The servants had enough to do with the child and their mistress; besides, nurse was so exceedingly cross that nobody liked to go near her. I was alternately abused and praised. If the pain abated, I was "the sweetest lady that ever walked, that I should give up my time to wait on *her*!

Was there ever such a thing heard of?" A paroxysm of pain would come; and then I suppose I heard the truth. She would rave and storm at me, because I could not lift her very large person by myself. "She should like to know what I was fit for. She would not give a halfpenny for a hundred such. The Lord help the poor man as did light on me! &c. &c." The poor creature, I knew, was intoxicated when she uttered these homely truths, for she *would* drink, and I thought she would have exterminated me at once, when I proposed to her to take barley-water instead of rum. She has three sovereign remedies for all kinds of disorders, brandy, rum, and gin.

But to be serious, you will understand that we have had enough to do. I have been well in health, so that I have had no excuse for not exerting myself; and really the care of the children, and the servants, and the nurse, and the few dozen lovers that the maids think fit to entertain in the kitchen, while I am supposed to be blind and deaf, is quite overwhelming to my mind. Did you ever see a certain respectable animal (to which by the bye I have always felt some ties of affinity) bending under a load above its strength, its head hanging down, its mouth open? Well, I fancy myself just like it at this present moment, and I wish you may be as much amused with the conceit as I am.

I am now alone again. I am sure it is well for me that I *do* love the children, for they form *my* world. I wish I was free from the sin of favouritism. Just that timid modest child who loves me best of all, I

have been always inclined to care the least about. She is just twelve years old, and as childish and innocent as most girls at eight. Oh how unlike she is to the *mature* misses, who are brought forward to display their accomplishments to mamma's visitors! She has been staying with her mother at C——, and it really quite revived the life of my heart to see the sweet respectful love that she has shown for me. I do love to see the kindly affections awakened. I am sure I don't want to make her sentimental or romantic, but I love to see the fruit of my labours, I love to see any symptom of the heart not resting in itself, but expanding in affection and care for others. I find she has been very much approved of by her aunts. I *do* think her a very sweet girl; and I think there is every prospect of her becoming a blessing to her family, for she is already I hope possessed of that "knowledge which leadeth unto life." "I don't know why, ma'am," she said just now, "but I am glad of every thing that makes you glad." So she watches for the opening of my flowers, that she may be the first to tell me. All the children love me a little, I think, but I am not necessary to any of them. Richard spoke of my "going away to teach some other children," with the most provoking indifference. Harriet said, "oh, I never thought of that, I never could be happy again," and for five minutes she was sad, and then her whole soul was occupied in dressing her little sister's doll.

Miss G—— has been sending me her friend's new book in franks. The last pages are come. It is

very spirited and clever, but—I had rather he had written the Velvet Cushion. I don't know why I should hesitate to tell you, unless it is from the fear that you should imagine I have imbibed a narrow party spirit, but I felt on the whole an impression of sadness after reading this lively work. I respect the author, and I grieved that there should be no trace of his profession in his book. I am sure I do not wish to interdict literature, or works of imagination, but I *do* think that a minister of the Gospel of Christ should not tell all the world that he has not been about his master's business, and indeed I cannot believe that a heart can be really devoted to the best of causes without showing it in all things. I cannot help thinking that there is great danger in these times. Religion is not such a distinct thing, as it was in the days of those who have gone before us. We have all a *little* religion. Evangelical professors are tolerated now in general society. They are not confined to a world of their own as they used to be. The consequence is obvious. The danger of imbibing a wordly spirit is increased to a fearful degree. It seems to me that every one has his own standard, and lowers and dilutes his faith accordingly. Mr. M—— places it in *reading* worldly books, *I* it seems in *writing* them. I do not know if I express my meaning, but it seems to me that the broad line of demarcation is in danger of being lost, or at least obscured; that many are striving to take the world in one hand, and God in the other. Ah! my dearest friend, I often tremble for you and for myself, when

I feel the world within! May we be at the last among the happy few, in whom the love of the Father, and not the love of the world, is found! My heart will not prophesy much of hope for us here, but we shall meet hereafter, and unite in praising Him "who ordereth all things well."

Ever yours.

LETTER LV.

TO THE REV. E. T. V.—

Yes, I know you give me full credit for not being of a jealous disposition. I have often smiled to see it, and I am so used to hear of your being devoted first to one charming creature and then to another, that I think nothing at all of it *now*. I confess if I were coming to live with you, and heard a good deal of other women, it would frighten me very much for *you*. I should utterly despair of making you happy, when put in competition with these paragons; indeed I often think *now*, that you have forgotten what I am, and are fancying me every thing that I am not; and then our love has been kept so long upon paper, that it is just starved to death for want of other nourishment. My heart seems shut up in such cold and cheerless apathy, that I sometimes doubt of its ever expanding again. It is well that you think of coming amongst us this summer, for I almost "forget what manner of man you are."

If a wife should have the same effect on you as she has on our pastor, you are better without one. In-

stead of soothing his natural irritability, and healing the breaches it makes among his people, she plays it off as an engine to gratify her own private piques. When he would stretch forth the hand of reconciliation to his curate, who is guilty of preaching better sermons, she interposes as the dæmon of discord. Yet how specious she is ! I have heard some men, and men of discernment too, speak of her as a perfect model for her sex. Even *I*, a woman, was completely deceived at first. I wonder at myself ; but I was so anxious to people the wilderness, so much in want of people to love ! Her husband would be much better without her. Through all the storm of his passions, there is at times a vein of tenderness that is very delightful to me ; a sort of mother's milk stirring in him ; a light that beams forth every now and then, like a mild evening sun across a wintry sky.

You probably know by this time that our new-married friends are settled at T——. The sun of happiness seems to shine upon them in full meridian splendour. Alas ! how very soon it *must* set ! I know *him* too well to indulge in any hopes from the sunshine of the moment. She only wants me to come and see her. I had rather wait a little. It would be impossible to raise my mind to her present tone. By the time you come, she may have descended to my level. She describes her uncle as often coming over to enjoy her happiness. “ Her garden is beautiful ; ” so is the cow, and the pigs, and the poultry, and the house, and the husband ; all is

“beauty to her eye, and music to her hear.” I could mingle a raven’s note in this conceit, but I forbear. She thought it strange in Mr. T——, when they called upon him at C——, to look with “an eye full of compassion on her gaiety.” Can any real friend do otherwise? I am afraid I am a little provoked with her, for being able to forget the character of the man whom she has married. She argues that it was expedient for her to marry him, because her health is too delicate to allow of any exertions to support herself; but this reasoning is unworthy of a professor of religion. It argues a want of faith in the care of Him, who has promised to provide for His people. She has acted on this, and we shall see what will be the consequence. It cannot come to good: and I wish she had the grace to be sorry for the necessity to which she yielded, instead of professing herself satisfied with her lot. You will say I am writing with all the spleen of an old maid. Well, I am not old enough yet to be classed amongst the sisterhood; and if I were, I have always thought that they form the best part of the community.

Only think of your reading my letter at a party! You may be sure, however their complaisance might induce them to listen, they would only wonder at you as I do. I could furnish you with a sequel to my ghost-story, but since I find that you read my letters in the market-place, I shall be careful what I say. This is *you* that could caution *me* a little while ago! “*You* never spoke of *me*” no more do *I* of *you*, much more read your letters. Was ever such inconsistency

heard of before? Well, I suppose in time "I shall have learnt my book," as the children say: I shall have learnt to reconcile contrarities: in the mean time, farewell.

LETTER LVI.

TO THE REV. E. T. V—,

My dear Friend,

There is one part of your last letter, which has left so painful an impression on my mind, that I find myself unable to wait for a convenient season to answer it. I allude to your remarks on my objections to the book of which I spoke. I find it impossible to wait till I *see* you; *that* may never be; and the question seems to me to involve the last hope that I have permitted myself to cherish. Our circumstances have for some time appeared to close the door of earthly hope; but, in proportion as I resigned the dream of my heart, and saw its gay colours fade before the waking eye of truth and reason, I have clung more fondly to the hope that beams from beyond the grave. I have said, "we shall spend an eternity together; we have the same views, the same hopes; and we are both looking in the same way to Him who is mighty to save." Is it possible that I have deceived myself here too? Must I resign this hope? The fearful apprehension of it has caused me two days of misery; and though I fear I shall fatigue and harass you, yet I cannot refrain.

I suspect that there was something wrong in the

spirit of my last letter by the tone of yours. I may afterwards explain farther, I mention it now, lest my own defective practice should operate in your mind against what I have to say. If I am wrong in my opinion of this book, the sin is on my own head; not a creature has seen it but myself; but I am not *yet* convinced that I am. I have not, as you imagine, "repeated the complaints of a party." Neither must you suppose that I "think it part of the Christian's duty to search out and note the faults of others;" but to *you*, I thought, I might express the disappointment, which my high regard for the author had occasioned me to feel. I confess I was the more ready to speak on the subject from many anxious fears that I have for you. May I be permitted to say, that I have sometimes feared, lest, being surrounded by amiable people, you should forget in the contemplation of their excellencies, as contrasted with the defects of religious professors, that they yet need one thing. I have felt the danger of this in myself. I was cautioned by one who cannot be suspected of a propensity to find fault with others, (Mrs. G—— of G—— House.) She said of my amiable friend, Mrs. R——, "Nothing can be more dangerous to a mind constituted like yours than the society of such a character as your new friend." And may there not be some danger for you? At least forgive the fear in one, who would hazard your displeasure to forward your best interests.

When I came to that part of the work which relates to Lord Byron, I did hope, and I laid down the book with sorrow and disappointment, when I

found that the author had nothing to say in his master's cause. A reproof to Byron on the evil tendency of his poetry might have done so much good, for he is not insensible to reproof, and I hope not yet incorrigible. You have perhaps heard that he was so much moved by the address to him in the *Christian Observer*, that he called upon the Editor to know who the author was. He was directed to Mr. Cunningham, and he took the trouble to pay him a visit, and express a desire for his friendship. Is Mr. Cunningham one of a party? Was Mr. Cecil, or is Mr. Wilson, and a hundred others whose light is shining before men? Am I to conclude, because there are some people of narrow and vulgar minds, who strain at a gnat and swallow a camel, because I find some hollow professors who impose on themselves as well as others, that all those who have made a decided choice of the master whom they will serve, are the same? That an entire devotedness of the heart to God is not required? And that the conversion of the soul to Him, and the restoration of His lost image is not the paramount business of our lives? Surely you must be very much changed if you think that a common assent to the doctrines of Christianity is enough. I will not believe this of you till you tell me so yourself, but I fear that you have some prejudices which are not worthy of you.

My opinions are changed since I first knew you. I will not shrink from the avowal whatever may be the consequence. I had some serious impressions, and I think a general respect for religion, but I did not know how much was required of me, I did not

know that a fitness for the enjoyment of an eternal sabbath in heaven must be begun in the soul on earth. I do not wish to belong to any sect or party. I may be mistaken, but I think it is a more intimate acquaintance with the word of God which has led me to form these conclusions. Comparing myself with his holy law, I find that I am without hope in myself, a lost and wretched sinner. I see the refuge ; the costly sacrifice of a Saviour's blood. I want to feel my interest in Him. I want, what the apostle calls, the "power to apprehend Christ." I pray for the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit. I look to be saved by grace alone, and justified by faith in the Redeemer of sinners. The evidence of Christ being formed in the heart is, I know, a holy life. That my practice is lamentably defective I admit. That evil dispositions and unchastised desires prevail, that the sigh of discontent for my lonely fate still rises in rebellion against his will, I daily feel and deplore. But, my dear friend, it will not always be so. His own precious words tell me that he will not cast out *any* that come to him ; that he will give strength and grace to them that really seek Him. He knows that I am sincere in my wish to love and serve him above all things, and mine eyes *shall* see his great salvation. In short, do not look at *me*, but at my meaning.

Surely we do think alike ! There is misery in the doubt—pray satisfy me quickly. If you are really become worldly-minded, my anxiety will appear very ridiculous. My fears for the author of the book in question I still think reasonable, and

still think a subject of concern and of prayer to all who are interested for his eternal welfare. This opinion of course I would not publicly avow. God grant that I may be mistaken, but I repeat, however excellent the work may be in all other respects, I should not have guessed it to be the production of a mind renewed by the Holy Spirit ; much less of a minister of Christ, who should bear on his breast the stamp of "holiness to the Lord," who is appointed to watch for souls as one that must give an account, and is therefore bound to lose no seasonable opportunity of advancing the Redeemer's kingdom. He has been disgusted, as you have been, by observing the emptiness of some, who have the form of godliness without the power. But what have we to do with such deceivers ? Can they make the fine gold less pure ? Surely not. The only thing we have to do is to pray for them, and be more watchful over ourselves, lest we also fail to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour.

Ah ! my friend, you *do* feel with me that it is no easy thing to be a christian. And, while there is such a thing as being not far from the kingdom of God ; while there is a possibility of stopping at the very threshold ; while we read that the path is narrow, and that many shall strive to enter in and shall not be able ; surely it is not for us to think, that any one can be too much in earnest, too fervent in prayer, too watchful over his own heart.

But I have left myself no room to answer your letter. I do not think I have ever needed any human influence to make me pity the unfortunate. I

do not think that I have ever, in thought, word, or deed, regarded the unhappy creatures you mention, with the "cold-hearted scorn," which you impute, I think rather unjustly, to my sex ; or that I have ever imagined myself more pure in the eye of a heart-searching God, because *they* have fallen by temptations to which I have not been exposed. As one who feels her own need of mercy, I can never refuse to stretch forth the hand of sympathy and kindness to the returning penitent. In what other way can I interpret the example which I profess to follow ? But I think the general good of society must be consulted. It may bear hard on some individual cases, but I think an offender of this kind should *never* be permitted to take her place in society again. A real penitent will not desire it. She will be content with the kindness which is shown her in retirement, and will not seek to escape the penalty of her fault. They are mistaken friends who advise her to any other line of conduct. These are my sentiments, and I suspect you will just now think them harsh and severe. I only think them just. At any rate I do not shrink from their avowal.

Yours, &c.

LETTER LVII.

TO THE REV. E. T. V.—

My dear Friend,

I thank you for writing directly. You were quite right in supposing that I should draw comfort from your letter. All our joys and sorrows are by comparison; and though every nerve about me is shaken by the contemplation of your misery, yet I am better able to bear this feeling than the terrible apprehension which you had awakened. The worst that can happen to us *here* I am prepared to meet. I have long surveyed my fate with a steady eye; and, in drawing my conclusions, I have been more sober and reasonable than you may imagine, or than is necessary to state now.

I sit down with a desire to comfort you, and yet I know not how. Do you really think that I shall abandon you to yourself, when I know your misery? No, it is not when you are unhappy that I can find any temptation to do this. When you are gay, and unmindful of me, I confess I feel no disposition to intrude upon you; but, in these times of sickness and sorrow, I feel as if you were more especially given up to me.

“I shall be happy,” you say. And do you forget, or disbelieve that my happiness is bound up in yours? It is true indeed that I could not exist without the consolations of religion, but you are deceived if you fancy that I am far advanced in my christian course. It is I hope my first concern; and I am become

more acquainted with *myself*; but there is not a sincere professor of religion, with whom I would not exchange my spiritual condition, be he what he may.

But I did not sit down to write about myself. You are ill and you are dispirited. I do not know if you have any new cause for anxiety. You have not explained, nor do I at all wish that you should. Perhaps the state of your health may have led you to despond more than usual. Be that as it may, I would beseech you not to suffer one thought of me to disturb your peace. Be assured I have no regrets of the kind you mention. Whatever may be the event, I have put it into the hands of God, and I know that, however contrary it may seem to my wishes, it will be a dispensation of mercy.

These feelings that you describe will precipitate you to an early grave. I must think that both you and I owe much of our misery to an improper system of education. When our minds should have been strengthened, and prepared for the coming struggle, they were softened into comparative helplessness, and deceived into a false estimate of human life. We expected more than life had to bestow. We looked for the early promise of a wild uncurbed imagination to be realized, and it is by the disappointment of every hope that we have become convinced of our error. We are indeed in a path that we should not have chosen for ourselves, but perhaps it may be the only one that would lead *us* to God. I have sometimes thought that, if we were together, we might assist each other in this important work; we might search

out the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven ; and mutually aid each other in becoming more and more “conformed to the mind that was in Christ ;” but he alone knows what is best for us. These speculations may be as vain as they are useless. Our habits of life have been so different since we first met ! *You* have lived among the elegancies of the great, and might consider as privation the humble path that I should take, if the choice were given me.

But I will say no more on this subject. I only beg that you will not add imaginary vexations to our real ones. I beg you will not fancy that you have been a cloud over me. It is not possible that you can really think so. I have told you before, and I tell you now, that I never felt any point of union with the mind of man till I saw you ; and I thought then, and I think now, that the similarity that appeared to unite us will go on to eternity. I differ from you I see on some points, but I have no inclination to discuss them now. With respect to the party you describe, I know nothing of it, and if your opinion be correct I wish to know nothing. I plainly see that there are some modern professors who dishonour their high calling, who mingle the narrowness of their own minds with their creed and practice. I am sorry for it, but it never moves me in any other way. I do not consider their defects as chargeable to their faith. I think, what would these people be without religion ? “To our own master we stand or fall.” I sometimes smile at the contraction which I see in many. What is with them a

point of conscience, may be none to me ; but, "if meat make my brother to offend," I had rather give up the point than dispute it. I *do* think it is safer to keep *within* the boundary, than to go to the very verge, and question what may be "in the bond."

Ah ! my dear friend, there are but *two* parties in this world. The distinctions that we make among ourselves are of little avail. God knoweth them that are his. The tares and the wheat grow up together, but the separation will some day be made. I extend the circle of real religion very widely. I believe that every humble and sincere follower of Jesus will be accepted of him, and that we shall meet some of all sects and parties in his kingdom. For my own part I never inquire whether people are Calvinists or Arminians. If they are pressing forward in the same narrow way, convinced of sin, and hoping only in a Saviour, I feel it a bond of union ; and however their opinions may differ on some points from mine, I am ready to stretch forth to them the hand of fellowship. I draw comfort from feeling in this way. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, *because* we love the brethren."

You are right in reproving me for my peevish strictures on Emily's marriage ; they were certainly not written in a christian spirit, but you surprised, and indeed alarmed me, for your own religious principles, when you asked "what she *could* have to make her otherwise than happy." Much I think to dash her cup with bitterness ; and I am greatly mistaken if every serious mind would not be of the same opin-

ion. Can any one doubt that she is unequally yoked? Has not she, a child of God, dared to unite herself to one who makes a mock at religion? You did not consider too, when you detailed so minutely all that she had escaped by her marriage, how much better I was able to particularize these things from daily, hourly experience of more than ever she was called upon to encounter. To prevent another lecture, I must just tell you the way in which Miss G—— wrote to me on the occasion.

“The fate of your friend does indeed appear gay and brilliant, my dear, and I fear, from the similarity between you in many respects, the contrast with your own unenviable lot will not fail to strike you with at least a transient sadness. Yet, do you know, I am perfectly convinced that happiness, or rather unhappiness, is more equally dispensed than we might at first imagine. With a happy comfortable home, and affluence, you would scarcely think me reasonable, if I were to tell you what a variety of vexatious circumstances we continually have to deplore—some serious evils, which are not of a nature to be spoken of, and which are perhaps not so bad in themselves, as in the anticipations they cause. In short I feel that even my *sober* mind draws its chief comfort from a future state of existence, and sighs for a better order of things, and another and a better world.”

This did me good. Perhaps it may you. I am afraid I have said little else that can comfort you, for I have written with the children about me. An el-

der and rather peevish maiden sister is here, and she cannot bear the noise of the children, so I am obliged to keep them here in their play-hours.

LETTER LVIII.

TO THE REV. E. T. V—.

My dear Friend,

What can you mean by wishing to go to India in order to save five hundred pounds a year? For whom, and for what, in the name of wonder, would you save it? Not for me, I am sure. I should feel the separation a final one, and mourn your loss as if it were your death, but I should scarcely consider it worth while to keep up even our present intercourse.

I believe I could have been instrumental in procuring you an appointment of this kind last summer; and since you designate our poor curate as one of a party, I will just tell you how such persons behave to those whom they have every reason to dislike. You know how much I have amused myself with his oddities, and how often I have made him ridiculous, or at least shown off his peculiarities in a very provoking manner. Well, one evening when he came down to the chapel, he said he had been a good deal perplexed by the offer of a situation in India of twelve hundred pounds a year. I turned quickly to him and expressed my surprise at his declining it, observing—"how many there are who would be glad

of it!"—"Are there?" said he, "I wish I knew of *one*." He continued to look at me with his keen eye, but I talked of something else. As we returned from chapel, he dropped behind the rest, and said to me—"don't think me impertinent, but if you have any relation or friend that you would wish to serve, I believe this thing is at my disposal, or at least my recommendation would be taken, and it would give me pleasure to procure it."

Will this reconcile you to the poor man, or shall I take your recommendation, and run off with him myself. I fancy it would not be with consent of all parties. There is one gentle heart that would go near to break, so I have *in pity* failed to improve my opportunities. I think I have not mentioned Miss W—— to you. She has been brought up in this deep solitude. Her mother died when she was very young, and left her in charge of a young family. She has performed the part of a mother to them, with a gravity of manner and a steady perseverance in her laborious duties, which are beyond all praise; but then, she has been left very much to her own reveries, for her father is entirely a man of business, and besides that a dry reserved silent man, so that the poor girl has been brought up in silence as well as in solitude. I do not know how it is, but she is one of the most pious excellent girls I ever met with. She scarcely ever reads any thing but her bible, and you would be surprised at the thorough knowledge which she has of it. She knows little else, and till I came she had no companion of her own age or sex.

Well, you will allow that such a person as this was just fitted to feel a single, deep, devoted attachment. I saw from the first how it would be, and strove with all my might to save her. It was so natural that she should first admire the preacher, and then love the man! for she saw nobody else; and then he showed great interest about her Sunday school, and assisted her in it, and wrote hymns, and taught the little creatures to sing them, and I found that when he was at the school-room with his flute, she was not quite so ready to walk with me as usual; yet she neither sang nor talked, she only stayed, and looked, and laid up misery for the future. I have a great objection to any one of my own sex falling very seriously in love, so I tried by all means to break the charm. She was not at all aware that I could see into the inner chamber of her heart, and I have been sometimes a little amused at her innocence, when she considered herself so very sly, and sure of her secret being undiscovered. She is naturally silent, and her secret consciousness kept her more so than usual before the object of it; and I saw that she thought I had great advantage in the careless unembarrassed manner in which I could talk to the man. She “wondered” that Mr. and Mrs. H—— should propose my having the eldest boy to educate in conjunction with this same curate. “It was so very odd—it was bringing us so much together—and—.” “And what?” I asked, as she made a pause, “do you really now think I can be in any danger from *him*? No, no, he may do very well for you young

misses, who have seen nothing better ; but I have been beyond the blue hills yonder, and I do assure you I shall not pull caps for Mr. M——.”

Well, all that I can say or do, the business still goes on. I should not so much mind, if he felt half as deeply, but there's the mischief, men think nothing of such deep feelings. He has already learnt his power, and made her wretched several times, and I cannot for the life of me disturb him. I put all my powers forth the other night to make him believe that he had committed an unpardonable offence, and he went on eating his supper with all the composure in the world, only remarking—“ Well, Miss C——, what a fuss you would make about—*nothing* ! I shall settle it all in five minutes, *when I have time*. Women have so many pretty fancies,” he said, “ dear creatures ! as if a man had nothing else to do but to dance after them.”—“ Oh, thou epitome of all thy sex,” I *thought*, but I did not say it ; and after all, I respect him very much. I respect even the prejudices of a narrow mind in the best of causes.

Ever yours.

LETTER LIX.

TO THE REV. E. T. V.—

My dear Friend,

I rejoice in the happy feelings which your last letter describes, but I cannot exactly enter into them. The transition from perfect hopelessness to joy and gladness is so very sudden that I cannot mount with you. Perhaps I do not sink so low, and therefore I do not rise so high. However that may be, I rejoice to find that the elasticity of your mind is not so entirely destroyed, as any one would have imagined who had read your last letters. I most sincerely hope that you may receive all the pleasure in your intended visit to your friends that you anticipate, and as I am invited to make my vacation at the same time, I suppose I shall be a witness of your satisfaction. I feel as if my heart was too dull to rise again. I look forward with great philosophy to the meeting. I can admit that we may be very happy for a little while, but then—. This is very ungrateful, and unworthy of a christian, you will say, to refuse the few flowers that spring up in the path. Perhaps my mind is tinged with more than usual gravity by the visits that I have been for some time making to one of our poor neighbours, who is in a dying state. Nothing can be more calm and tranquil than her state of mind. Never has the “king of terrors” been more patiently waited for. “I know in whom I have believed,” she says to her husband. And how

earnestly she prays that he may find for himself "the joy and peace in believing !" But though his feelings are touched, his heart I fear is closed to all but his worldly interests and pursuits. How terrible must death be to those "who are at ease in their possessions !" For even here, in the full triumph of christian principle, his approach is awful, and his seal is terrific.

I wish, when you preach before your bishop, you would teach him better than to rail at the Bible Society. How grieved I was to see his charge, so full of bigotry and *party-spirit*, talking against Calvinism without knowing what Calvinism is ! This I am told he has fully proved in his "Refutation ;" and Mr. Scott in his answer has convicted him of mistakes which a school-boy might have detected. I heard a very moderate Arminian and a very clever man say, that it was "wisdom answering ignorance." I should like to choose your text. I wonder what the poor bishop understands by the Apostle's injunction—"take heed, and beware of covetousness." I cannot receive the doctrines of Calvin for myself, but I have no prejudice against those who do. Some of the best persons that I know are Calvinists, and they are not only the holiest but the happiest christians that I have ever met with. They love God as a reconciled Father. They delight in his service. And their zeal for his honour makes them hope, that he may have purposes of mercy in store for the vilest of sinners even at the last hour ; therefore they do not condemn their neighbours, nor consider the case of any

as utterly hopeless. I am judging of them all as I have seen the doctrine adorned by one family. I think Antinomianism is often mistaken for Calvinism. But we shall have plenty of time to talk of this.

Have you any serious thoughts of crossing the river to see this beautiful country? I think it would amply repay you for your trouble. All that is soft and beautiful in nature you would find in this land of deep chasms. Let me know beforehand if you come; for I do not like to be surprised into any thing, not even into pleasure; besides that, one loses one of the chief pleasures of life—anticipation; and then I am always ill if any thing comes suddenly upon me.

Yes, I have read “the World before the Flood” with much delight. That is a fine passage which you quote, but there are many others which touched me more. I dare say the remorse of guilt is very well delineated, but one cannot identify one’s-self with such feelings, and so I suppose they did not particularly strike me. I do not class Montgomery with Wordsworth yet, though I know they have been weighed in the same balance. There has been a great change in Montgomery since his first publications. He is become a religious character, and I shall be much surprised if all his poetry is not tinged with devotion.

How you exult over my mistake about the O——s! As if *you* were never mistaken in any body or any thing! Those who have glass windows should not throw stones. You know you always believe what

people tell you of themselves, provided that it agrees with your own wishes and feelings.—I have fallen into the lowest pit of disgrace, for I have accompanied the poor curate, (who is gone away because he is popular as a preacher) and his beloved in a long walk to see a beautiful spot, which I should like to show you, but of which I spare you the description. I can never hope to be forgiven this going over to the enemy's camp; and I am only sorry that I cannot repeat the offence, but he is gone, and the sensation created in the parish by his departure cannot be very pleasing to our poor vicar. How vain it is to put our happiness in the power of any created being! Our vicar cannot be happy unless his people think him, not only the best man but the best preacher that ever lived, and so he is at the mercy of every human being in the parish.

You are certainly right to go through evil and good report in the path of duty; but should you not first be quite sure that you *are* in that path; and above all, is it safe to disregard "the voice of the people?" It is in general a very safe guide. I expect you will give me credit for great worldly prudence; but, in truth, I think it would be as well if *you* had a little more of the wisdom of the serpent; for I am afraid you will never go right, till you have a *governess* to direct you.

I am rather anxious to hear from S——. I have had an opportunity of placing my youngest sister as partner in a school. I could not advance all the premium without asking for the few pounds that are

owing to me. I was *very, very* unwilling to do it, but as another's interest was concerned, I thought I had no right to yield to my own inclinations, so I wrote and have had no answer.

I hear that Mr. D—— and Mr. F—— are coming over when I am at D—— on purpose to see me. Such a threat is quite sufficient to keep me away. The idea of any one's coming over to look at me is quite frightful. In happier circumstances I might have spirits for such things. Do not suppose I am unhappy. My mind is calm and quiet, but it is the stillness that succeeds to the privation of all earthly hope. Emily speaks of the christening of Mr. D——'s baby. I did not know that he had one. What a happy woman his wife must be, to have increased the fortune of the man she loved, by giving him her income when she married him! Alas! what a stumbling-block have I been in your way! You might have been as fortunate. But I shall have my head cut off—so farewell till we meet.

LETTER LX.

TO THE REV. E. T. V——.

My dear Friend,

You desired to have an early account of my safe return so I *force* myself to write. It is very strange. I used to have pleasure in writing to my friends, but now, when my mind and heart have been revelling in the full enjoyment of all the lux-

uries of congenial society, it seems a tame and insipid gratification. My mind is weakened and stupified with the " sudden wrench" from such dear and valued friends. I am as yet stunned with the blow, and I scarcely know what I am about, or with whom I am. It seems so strange to be in so short a time set down in a different sort of world, among persons who know nothing of all that interests or concerns me, and who are totally distinct from me in all their ideas and pursuits. You would smile if you could see how very difficult I find it to give them any idea of the pleasures I have enjoyed in the society and conversation of my friends. All their ideas of enjoyment are comprised in going about to different places, and seeing a variety of things ; and as I have only been in one place, where my pleasure has been to see the same things every day, I find it very hard to convince them that I have spent my time at all agreeably. " And so you have only been to G—— all this time !" said Mrs. H——. " Well, I am sure I expected to hear so much of what you had seen and heard !" I try to select something out of what I have heard that will amuse her, but it is a vain attempt. I am quite unfitted by my late intellectual society for my present situation, and it will be some time before I can descend to the level of things about me.

Yet, you are not to suppose that I am wretched. Believe me, I am much happier than I was before we met. The sunshine of hope has revived in my heart. " This state of things will have an end," I sometimes say ; " I shall not always be a governess."

—But I am to tell you something of my journey. I found myself in C—— before I knew where I was. I sent up my note to Miss H——, and she very civilly came down, and wondered at my ceremony, and took me to her house to sleep. I found there two persons from this neighbourhood, Mr. T—— and his daughter. The former was returning the next morning, and I very gladly put myself under his care for the rest of the journey. He is a very kind hearted man, a widower. I soon discovered his profound admiration of my hostess. She is the eldest of the sisters, and a very superior kind of person. The poor man sat, and looked, and stayed so long after supper that I began to fear he had forgotten to go away. I find that he has offered himself, and been refused ; but she managed the business with so much civility, as not to disturb the harmony of intercourse between the families.

I arrived here about two o'clock in the day on Tuesday. The children received me very joyfully. Their cousin from London had supplied my place, I found, and was keeping school. “Such a governess !” Mrs. H—— said, “she could not tell me what she had not done with the children.” I should be glad to find out any good that she *had* done. I found nothing but anarchy and confusion in the school-room. She has taught them to dance a few Scotch steps ; and she plays herself upon the piano ; and she draws as she has been taught, and without any natural taste whatever, for I think I never saw such wretched attempts as she makes without her

master's improving stroke ; but, for all this she is set up, and evidently thought very far my superior in accomplishments. I never in my life saw any thing so conceited as this little minx. She is between thirteen and fourteen, as forward in her mind and manner as Mary O——, with all the airs of a vulgar London boarding-school grafted upon it. This is one of my petty vexations, and it would have more power to vex and harass me, if my mind was not so much occupied by the past, and I may say enlivened with the hope of the future.

Yet, how uncertain all our prospects are ! I am like one who has embarked his treasure on a tempestuous ocean, and stands watching the waves that threaten his total wreck, without any power to control them. They are wise who depend only on the favour of God for their happiness. They are the people who are kept in perfect peace. I told you that the Miss I——s gave me an invitation to stop at D—— on my return. The first thing I heard on my return was the death of the eldest. Death was gain to such a pious humble christian as she was, and her health had been long declining, so that it is only the survivors who are to be pitied. Say every thing that is kind for me to my dear Mrs. K——, my G——mother, and to all my kind friends. Tell them they have made me good for nobody else.

Ever yours.

LETTER LXI.

TO THE REV. E. T. V—.

My dear Friend,

I do not feel *now* as I did when I wrote last. I am perfectly aware of my situation. I know and feel deeply that I am *here*. It is well that I have some stated employment to fill up my time, but I am glad when the joyless day is past, and I can shut my door, and think that all its "fretful stir" is over. You cannot imagine how entirely I find myself disqualified for these people. I am completely thrown out by the last six weeks, in which my mind as well as my heart has been called into action. In this place it seems quite unnecessary to have any mind. I try in vain to recover the tone of this society. I hear the same sort of things said by Mrs. H—; the same sort of gossip is retailed by nurse; and I cannot revive the interest which I used to feel in the world about me. I retire to the world within, and almost pity *them*, that they cannot do the same, and rest from their frivolous curiosities and insignificant pursuits.

But all this is wrong, and I shall vehemently strive against it; for I cannot bear to shut myself up in moody silence, and feed on my own selfishness. I force myself to listen to nurse's legendary lore, and in time my mind will recover from this diseased state. Yet, it is somewhat humiliating to discover in this way, how much we are the creatures of habit and circumstance; and what a tendency there is in us to

conform to the influences around us, of whatever nature they may be ; besides that, the more I become assimilated to the people here, the more disqualified I am for you, and for any intellectual exercise. 'This is very sad. I sometimes think I shall verify Miss G——'s prediction, and lose the few ideas I have. It may be indeed said that I am alone with my own thoughts. There is nothing to dissipate them. No wonder if they sometimes conjure up fearful images, and make me torment you and myself with the visions of a distempered fancy. In the calm monotony that surrounds me, I seem the only restless dissatisfied creature. I sometimes climb up to the highest point, with as much eagerness as if I had some important object in view ; yet I have no other desire than just to get so high, as to be able to look beyond these hills that seem to shut me in on every side.

There is one part of your letter to which you will expect a decided answer. My dearest friend, however much I may feel my present situation, you may rely upon me, I am not so weak and selfish as to take advantage of your kindness and affection, and consent to our union until you are entirely free from all pecuniary difficulties. If you cannot support yourself without being involved, how would you maintain a wife ? You talk of such circumstances never occurring again. It may be so, but you shall be at least free from debt, before you change your condition with me. I sometimes satisfy myself in my present desolation, by thinking that after all we might not be happy. How would *you* be able to bear with

a confined income? What would be to me but as a customary habit might be to you a real privation. Do not be angry ; these speculations are not without their use in our present position, though I confess that they sometimes rise like the blast of the desert, and wither every flower that love and hope had planted.

My sub-governess is gone, but she has left an indelible mark behind. Among her fancied perfections, she had a real one, that of working industriously at her needle. After the school in the morning, when I am generally exhausted and unfit for any thing, *she* could sit down and work for her aunt. This will never be forgotten ; and herein I admit her superiority, and lament over myself. They all entreated this girl to come again, except my eldest pupil. *She* parted from her with perfect indifference, and has never mentioned her in any way since she has been gone. I am pleased to see the natural effect of such a character upon a simple ingenuous mind. Mr. H—— is exactly the same in his behaviour to me as he has always been. He never stoops to these petty cares, but seems to live in another atmosphere, where he knows nothing of the ebbs and flows of other persons' humours.

I rejoice to hear that your uncle approves of me. He is not, I know, the arbiter of your fate, but still I could not be happy to hear of his dissent from your wishes. He must not be called upon, however willing he may seem, to make any sacrifice for us. At his time of life, a change of residence would be at-

tended with great discomfort to himself, and besides I do not think his presence would tend to your happiness.

Do you know there is one part of my conduct during my stay at G—— that gives me great pain to remember? I mean my neglecting to go into C—— to see poor Miss F——. There was something so decidedly selfish in my failing to sacrifice one day at least to her, who has done so much for me. I remember the excuses that I made at the time to satisfy myself; that I had no conveyance, and that I could not walk so far; and another thing that weighed with me, was her not being very popular in our party; but all these reasons fall to the ground, when I look at them on sober reflection. I see that, if it had been a thing that I liked, I should have done it; but, as it was, I consulted my own ease; and when I think of all her kindness to me, I detest myself for being so selfish. If ever you see me giving way to such dispositions again, I charge you to remind me, as you would save me from the pain of self-reproach.

Next week *you* begin your journey homeward. May God be with you, and protect you on your way!

Ever yours.

LETTER LXII.

TO THE REV. E. T. V.—

My dear Friend,

I rejoice to hear of your safe arrival at your own home. I begin to write as you desire to-day, but I have little hope of finishing, or of writing in any comfort. The little hour between one and two is all that I can appropriate, and when we walk I have not that. I am afraid I shall not be a very good correspondent this winter, to you or any one; for, besides other impediments, I think I have lost my taste for scribbling; and then we have an inundation of work in the school-room which must be done. I made a protest against doing any needle-work when I engaged myself, but really when one sees so much to be done, it is not possible to stand aloof; so I have gradually given in, and now, I know that I am expected to do much more than I do. Mrs. H—— thinks that I can have nothing to fatigue me, because I don't make the puddings and scold the servants; but I do her wrong; she is not a scolding mistress.

I have been inexpressibly shocked since my return at a circumstance which has occurred in this neighbourhood. A young lady, who was considered very amiable and elegant, was on the point of marriage. A few days before the ceremony she took poison and died. She set about her work of death, with a calm desperation of purpose that is quite terrible to hear. She said nothing till she knew the effects of the poi-

son must be fatal, and then she confessed what she had done ; and in order to alleviate the excessive grief of her intended husband, she told him that she was quite unworthy of his affection, and that it was her sense of this, and the horror that she felt at his being deceived in her, which had led her to commit the fatal act. Another gentleman had previously paid his addresses to her, and her fame had suffered from his desertion, but nothing had been seen by others that was reprehensible. Alas ! what a noble mind seems to have fallen here, for want of genuine religious principle !

But there are some parts of your letter to which I must reply. You “ trust that I am now quite above the meanness of suspicion.” I really cannot say whether I am quite so exalted a personage as you are willing to fancy me, so I would advise you not to put me to the proof. I certainly do not feel the smallest objection to the dethronement of any of your idols, but more especially of that one who is so perfectly well satisfied that she reigns alone, and that “ you care nothing about me, nor about any body in the whole world but herself !” Emily would not have said so much about me as she did, if she had not been provoked at her conceit ; but all that she could say failed to convince her that you cared for any body else. I wish I had such a comfortable assurance, and satisfaction in my own powers. I wonder that I have *any* power, and am always surprised at a proof of it in any one. Do not mistake me. I have no fear about you, but just now I feel a little pro-

voked that you are so near this little piece of conceit, and I wish to warn you against her. When I first heard of her folly I only laughed, and wondered that Emily should feel any irritation about it. I have no cause at present to fear her, and you "hope I shall never be so ridiculous again." I must be allowed to say in justification of my *former* self, that if you were to entertain me again with accounts of this silly woman's "supreme powers of fascination," and remarks on her "innocent freedoms of manner," which, let me tell you, are indicative of more levity than propriety in a female; and above all, if you were to favour me with speculations and conjectures upon her power of making *you* happy;—I do not know, but I think I should be super-human if I did not feel a little uneasy. Just recollect your own very unreasonable objections to my liking Mr. M——'s preaching, a man whose person and manner are positively disagreeable to me.

I have received a letter from your wretched parishioner. I would have answered it if my time had been my own; but a letter to her will require more thought and care in the composition, than I am just now able to give. There is a tone of cheerless misery in her letters which ought I suppose to affect me, but strange to say it does not; that is, not as she expects. The cause I think is this: perhaps I judge her harshly, but there appears to me nothing *real* about her. Now, in speaking of her former situation in her family, she evidently *paints* entirely from an imagination not sobered by time, or corrected by

judgment. Neither does there seem any intuitive sense, that her unqualified expressions of attachment to you as a single man, might be somewhat chastened or subdued with perfect propriety. I mention this, because I would caution you on this point against misinterpretation. There is no need of caution or explanation with those who *know* you, but it is against those who do not that I would guard you.

Miss G—— is disappointed at not obtaining for you the offer of the living of S——. She says, “I lament my own disappointment, for after the first twelvemonth you would have been such an acquisition to our society.” She gives us a very reasonable time for our honey-moon.

You would be amused if you could see the letter I have just received from my dear sister Sophy. Her health has been better lately, and she seems to have some portion of the wild inexhaustible spirits of her childish years. She writes as if I was going to be married to-morrow, though I was careful to guard against such an idea in my letter. Amidst all her extravagance, I expect you will very much love the disinterested spirit which has led this dear girl, from her days of infancy, to prefer her sister's happiness to her own.

Ever yours.

LETTER LXIII.

TO THE REV. E. T. V—.

My dear Friend,

It is well for me that you are satisfied with any thing in the shape of a letter. I am sure, if I waited till I had some information worth the postage, you would have very few letters. I congratulate you on your recovery. I know the origin of your indisposition. I heard all the story of your amazing imprudence. Pray why should you sacrifice your health for the pleasure of Lord and Lady D——? Remember that they would not care if you died the next day, so that you helped to ease them for a short space, of the heavy burthen of their time. This is uncharitable you will say;—well, show cause; prove the contrary of the individuals I mention; and then I will admit it.

You are quite right. My opinion is changed about Mrs. L——, the lady I mentioned to you. I have ceased to consider her fate as an enviable one. They are an ill matched pair, but I consider her of the two as the most pitiable. Miss B—— calls him a forlorn single man in married life, and so I think he is; for in point of intellect she is a child, with whom he can have no interchange of thought or feeling; but then he has no business to be unhappy; whereas I think she has some causes of complaint, and even of unhappiness. In such a match as this, I think the principal thing to be lamented is, that such a wife can never do her husband good, and she *must* do him harm.

She may not make him unhappy ; she may perform her household duties very well ; but a constant intercourse with a mind of very inferior order is not, to say the least of it, an improving thing. The habit of stooping will in time lower the position, and the character will deteriorate in proportion. You will say that the mind which is inferior will rise, so it may to a certain point, but—"nothing can come of nothing"—in short, I may not be able to prove it to you, but I am quite sure that nothing tends so much to pull a man down and keep him down, as a marriage with a woman of very inferior understanding. If you knew the parties personally, I am sure you would agree with me.

I have been quite alone here for some days. Mr. and Mrs. H—— are out, and to-day our principal servant is gone up to the vicarage, to assist in the dinner which is given to the bishop. I have no other company than nurse, who is in a furious ill humour because, "since mistress has gone out" a certain piece of boiled beef has been dressed without her knowledge. She had set her heart upon dining here that day, and she mourns and grumbles as if we had cheated her of her patrimonial inheritance. The poor old creature is quite childish about her sensual enjoyments ; and no wonder, for she has no other.—"I am sure, nurse, I never thought of you."—"I should like to know who you do think about, except them tiresome brats of children, and they all want a good flogging, and so I shall tell their mother."—I could have told her of a few other persons that I

sometimes think of, and who perhaps might have helped to make me forget her love of boiled beef.

She is just now grumbling at a new outrage of our poor pastor's. He certainly is very irritable, but I cannot help loving him a little through all his tempers. The other evening, when he came down to the lecture, he announced his intention of staying to supper with me. I was amazed, for he has declined doing so, ever since he had reason to suppose that we approved of his unlucky curate. However I was not long left in doubt. I soon found that his intention was to give me a private lecture. I thought of you, and could hardly help smiling, when I thought of the infinite satisfaction you would have had, in hearing my misdemeanors canvassed. He began by asking me, with his usual arch smile, if I would please to let his next curate alone, for I had turned the head of the last. I protested that I had had nothing to do either with his head or heart; "if he wanted to know who had, he must go a little higher up."—"Oh, he had heard all that nonsense; but he knew the value that Mr. M—— set on my opinion, and how conceited he grew about the sermons that I approved." I begged to know which they were; and I assured him, in all truth, that I had never uttered a word in approbation of any one of his sermons in my life.—"Oh, but there were ways of flattering without speaking a word."—"Very possibly, but I was wholly unacquainted with them; and if I had known them, I should have made it a point of conscience not to practise them on the gen-

tleman in question. He was already on very good terms with himself, and I was sure he would acquit me of every thing but finding fault with him on all occasions."—"Oh, but I had walked out with him and Miss W——." "That was true, and it proved my intimacy with Miss W—— and not with him. She would not have been permitted to walk with him alone, therefore she asked me to accompany them to a place which I had a great desire to see." In short, I cleared up all the clouds; and had the satisfaction of explaining some parts of Mr. and Mrs. H——'s conduct which had dissatisfied him. So you would have been disappointed, after all, of hearing me scolded, for we parted in high good humour.

I wish you may be right in your opinion that the lady I cautioned you about, has not any other than a friendly feeling towards you. Some friendships are very tender; and *your* not perceiving how high the thermometer rises, is no proof to *me* of its remaining at the same point. At any rate you should be careful. You have never been sufficiently so. You have given more than one young lady reason to apprehend that you were about to make her an offer, when you had no such intention. I have already told you that you cured one, who was in daily expectation of a proposal, by "wishing you could see her well married." Some people are not so easily cured.

Ever yours.

LETTER LXIV.

TO THE REV. E. T. V—.

My dear Friend,

I was glad to hear from another quarter a true account of you. I congratulate you that the winter is so far advanced without bringing you its usual accompaniment of illness. Our new curate has only been here three weeks, and he is quite overpowered with the cold weather and the laborious duty. He is just the reverse of our last, who was too active. This one will certainly not offend on that point, for it is very difficult to move him from the fire-side at all. He dines, and he smokes his pipe, and he goes to sleep till tea-time, unless he has an evening lecture to give, and then, for any thing I know, he might just as well be asleep. Nobody could sleep when Mr. M— preached. If his sermon failed to move us, his loud voice and vehement gesture kept us all awake.

The first night this poor man preached, I was walking home from chapel in silence, quite determined that I would not be first to give my opinion. Miss W— walked by my side, and she too was silent. I thought of the Jews who wept when they saw the second temple; but we did not weep. Somebody touched my arm; it was nurse. "A humming bee in a pitcher," she said, and passed on. So you see we have gone from one extreme to the other. Only think of my amazement to hear the man "hope that we had liked his sermon!" Mr. H— began

to stir the fire, and seemed to be especially interested about one piece of coal that escaped from the tongs. Poor Mrs. H—— said with infinite simplicity, “oh dear, sir, it was all very good :” for which we laughed at her unmercifully when he was gone, begging her to point out the passages that she so much approved.

I am very glad if any thing that I have written has done your friend any good, but I do not hear of her fancies about me with any pleasure. The more I know of myself, the more do I turn from the flattery of a fellow-creature. I daily feel humbled to the dust when I think of my great advantages, and the little progress I make in the narrow path ; and then she sends me a letter full of her amazement at my wonderful attainments ; and, if I may believe her, I have already reached perfection. I read, and feel as a thief may be supposed to do when he is complimented on his scrupulous honesty. Alas ! I have too much reason to fear and tremble, lest I should be one of those *almost* christians, who shall hear at the last day—“Depart from me—I never knew you.”

I will thank you to acknowledge from me the arrival of her letter, and say that she has my good wishes, &c. If I am not very much mistaken, this will satisfy her very well ; for I really cannot believe that my plain sober letters can have any charm for *her* ; and as to my giving her any instruction on religious subjects, alas ! she plainly shows me that it is thrown away. She repeats the very same phrase, which in a former letter I animadverted upon. Speaking of her imperfections, she says, “but where I fail, I trust my Saviour’s merits will make it up.”

This is surely neither law nor gospel. If salvation is not a free gift, I have no hope. Justification by Faith, of which our good works are the fruit and evidence, seems to me as clearly set forth in the Bible, as the noon-day sun in the sky. She puts a wrong construction on one part of my letter. I intended to convey, by my silence on that subject, a gentle hint of the extreme indelicacy visible in her manner of writing and acting. It is a thing in which a stranger intermeddleth not, but I did not wish to show any displeasure. However I am quite convinced, by the description which she herself gives in this last letter of her ecstasies at meeting Mr. C——, and indeed by her whole conduct, that this lady's ideas of female propriety and decorum are strangely at variance with mine.

I would not judge too harshly, but there is in every woman a native inward sense of delicacy, that protects her from any undue liberty in the other sex, and guards her from every thing like impropriety in her own conduct. Now when I see this natural guardian dethroned, and the sense so blunted as not to perceive the boundary, and not to know when it is over-stepped, I do not say that I am called upon to judge that person, but I always find myself inclined to avoid her. In fact I have made it, all through life, an imperative rule, to shun all intercourse with such persons as I have described : and why should I break through my rule in her case? The good I may do her is at best very doubtful ; the harm I may do myself is positive ; for I hold it impossible to escape from the society of such persons uninjured.

And so you pretend to think I shall manage you ! I dare say you would be very likely to ask me whether you might go to dinner at Lord D——'s ; and if you did put such power in my hands, I am sure I would not promise to use it very temperately. I have heard of this same nobleman from other persons, and I have also heard of your visits. Mrs. B—— asked me what I thought of your keeping such company. She described the individuals of whom it was composed, among the rest Mr. and Mrs. S——, *he* ridiculing every thing like religion, and tolerating it in *you*, only because it does not interfere with him or his pursuits. All this and much more I heard, as I stood one night with my candle lighted to retire. I made no remark, but I thought I would suggest to you the inexpediency of mixing with such people. It seems to me a complete bar to any ministerial usefulness in your parish, among the poor at least, who look up for example, and superior holiness of conduct, as well as precept. They cannot be expected to judge liberally, and it is necessary to respect their prejudices, if you would be the means of saving their souls.

My dearest friend, will you "forgive me this wrong?" I do confess that I have suffered much uneasiness lately when I have heard of your associates. I have trembled lest you should be drawn in to "follow a multitude to do evil." In some few moments of bodily weakness lately, I have felt as if I longed for the time, when my soul, freed from the burden of sin, should join the "ransomed host," and

adore Him for the wonders of redeeming love. This may be enthusiasm, but it is the "wine of life." I should be a poor melancholy creature, if I confined myself only to this world; for I feel that nothing short of endless happiness will satisfy me. Very often, when my mind has been exalted by these views, I have returned to you in idea; and where have I found you? In the midst of "all that can assault and hurt the soul;" with people who trample on the law of God, and forget in the pomp and glitter of earthly greatness, that "for all these things God will bring them to judgment." Alas! I have thought "how shall he escape?" I should most assuredly fall; and I find no ease till I have carried these anxious cares, where I have been used to lay them all; and prayed earnestly that you might be preserved in the fire of temptation.

Again I beg you to forgive me if there is any thing offensive in this letter, and to impute it to the right cause, an anxious desire to preserve the health of your soul in the unwholesome atmosphere in which you are destined to live.

Farewell.

LETTER LXV.

TO THE REV. E. T. V.—

My dear Friend,

I am ready to give you all possible credit for taking my lecture in good part. I do not wonder at the shade of gravity which tinges your letter, but I cannot think that I did wrong in unfolding to you the apprehensions which had long oppressed me. It is very certain that the influences around you are not of a favourable nature. I ought not to have believed it at all you think. Mrs. B—— spoke in an ambiguous manner, and classed all in the same party; but I dare say, if I had asked about it, the matter would have been cleared up at once. Very often afterwards, when I was alone with her, I thought, “now in one moment I could be satisfied,” but I was as often checked by the same feeling which restrained me at first. I felt as if it would be dishonourable to make inquiry about you of any one but yourself; and when I was with you my courage failed, or I forgot it, or I put it off; it was only now when the season came round again that my fears revived. “I ought to have known you better,” you say. When every one else feared, how could I help it? You admit all that can be said against the people of rank among whom you live, and yet do not see any danger to yourself in their society, because your eyes are open to their faults. You may be to me above all other men, and yet I cannot think that

you are super-human, therefore I cannot see that you are safe till you "come out from among them." You "hope you have set the matter at rest for ever." No, I shall never cease to fear for you in the same proportion as I do for myself. "My heart's desire and prayer is that we may be saved," but I read that only they who endure unto the end shall inherit the kingdom, and how can I depend upon what we are now? Is it not very necessary to pray and watch against the approach of evil? When I am oppressed with the idea that in this world we shall know no other union than that which binds us now, I am the more anxious to secure an inheritance that shall never pass away.

I sometimes draw comfort in looking back on my past life since I have known you, in tracing the chain of events that has brought us together. What a gracious hand has been over me! How many mercies have I to record! What friends have been raised up for me in my toilsome path! Who is it that has turned your heart to me, and given me its full affection? Who has preserved it to me amidst the fascinations of others, the united charms of youth, and beauty, and unbroken health, and confident spirits? In absence and distance too, how could I dare to hope that I should have any power over you? Surely this is the work of a gracious God, who will perhaps complete it in His own good time.

I write by snatches as usual. You always expect a heterogeneous mass. I must confess I am delighted to find that your eyes are open to the real charac-

ter of Mrs S——. You do not think it right for her to leave her child even for these great people. What mother with any heart could do it? You remember how you used to say, when we were at T——, that she did not show such tenderness as some mothers, but you had no doubt she felt as much. Emily said when we were alone, “only see how impossible it is to open his eyes when he wishes to think well of a person. I very well know that this woman is too vain to love, or to think much of any one but herself, yet nothing convinces him.” I could not help being vexed that you should be so dazzled by the mere beauty of a woman, and talk so much of her fascinating powers, and her innocence. By the bye, I am very much puzzled to know in what her innocence consists! She was just so innocent as to believe, and boast of, her complete power over you, and to deny with vehemence that you were engaged, or that you cared for any body but herself; and she who talked in this way was the innocent wife of another man! I dare say, if the truth could be known, though she may now admit that you are entangled with another, she pities you very much for it, and thinks that, if you had not been so involved, you would have been blest with her. I thank goodness I am satisfied on that point. Such a heartless woman could not have made you happy. Many a time, when I only knew her from your description, I have sighed over the impossibility of my ever becoming like her. Many a time I have said, “perhaps she is more fitted to make him happy than I

am, perhaps he has thought so." My conscience is quite at rest upon that point now.

We have been in some confusion in the house, in consequence of a discovery that was made one fine morning that one of the servants was a thief. My sister Mary has had the same disaster in her house, and it is her first essay in housekeeping, but she never makes a trouble of any thing. She seems to have the art of extracting sweets from every quarter. Her letters now are full of the delights of the holidays, and of being at liberty. "Few people know such enjoyments," she says. And when the children come back, she will expatiate on the comfort she feels in having a house of her own, and the pleasure she takes in some of the little ones; and Sophy says, "such a set as they are, so stupid, and so disagreeable!" What a difference there is in their dispositions! but it is quite delightful to see how tenderly they love each other. I have observed that many sisters never think it necessary to *express* any affection for each other, whatever they may feel. Here are the Miss H——s who never even speak kindly to one another, yet I suppose they *do* love one another, though it does not appear. I am very glad that the *manner* with us is very different.

Ever yours.

LETTER LXVI.

TO THE REV. E. T. V—.

My dear Friend,

I have waited for a little more leisure, but it will not be. Constantia however is going out next week, and I shall then perhaps have a few days to myself. She is an extra pupil that I have had for some weeks, a tall girl of fourteen, who has been finished at school and knows nothing. She has no mother, so her father has put her under my care for some time to teach her as much as I can, and to *make her strait*, an ingenious device of his and Mrs. H—'s, for my amusement these holidays. However I shall be very glad if I can be of any service to her, not only as an opportunity of usefulness, but from the respect I bear to her father.

When she is off my hands, I will write to Mrs. K—, since you so much wish it, but I think you must be mistaken in supposing that *she* desires it. I agree with you that we should not attach so much importance to the accuracy of our views as to the depth of our feelings; but yet on this *one* point I think you have not considered the necessity of a *right knowledge*, when you say—"if the heart be right, &c." It seems to me that the heart cannot be right without a knowledge of God in Christ, and how can we be said to know him, if we in any way depend upon ourselves for justification? If we accept him only in *part*, it seems to me not "entering in at the

door but climbing up some other way;" and are not such the people who will be asked "how camest thou in hither, not having on the wedding-garment?" I have always thought that it was the righteousness of Christ that was meant here; but I have had very little assistance from commentators in reading the Bible, so that I may in many places have misapprehended; yet I cannot help considering this knowledge of Christ essential, and the first step in any real reformation, certainly in that change of heart which is required in the children of God.

Yes, your book has at length reached me. The other night a parcel was put into my hands, which came, nobody knew how. I opened it, and saw your name *in print* as an author. I turned the leaf hastily, as if the sight was too precious to be given to common eyes. I question if a book of sermons was ever so interesting before. May the blessing of God Almighty go forth with you, and make you in this work as well as every other a *successful* labourer in the vineyard! I know your principal desire is to be useful, and so is mine for you, and I think it will be answered; for, however my judgment may mislead me as to the merit of these sermons as literary compositions, I do humbly hope and believe, that they will not be read by any one without profit to the soul. I cannot tell you with what unspeakable delight I feast on all those passages which prove that our faith is the same; that a hope drawn from the same source is equally ours; that every thing is in dependence on a crucified Saviour; and though they are all in reference to

this, yet I think I delight most in those sermons where this is the most distinctly stated ; not perhaps because they are superior as compositions, but because I think that they are the discourses that will be blest to the readers and hearers : for I cannot help thinking that “ Jesus Christ and him crucified ” is the only preaching that is ever blest to the conversion of souls. Other sermons may be useful to those who already know the truth ; but the greater part of every congregation require to be informed on the gospel plan of salvation ; and my joy is unbounded when I find that all you have written tends to exalt the Saviour, and set him forth as the only hope of the sinner.

You will say, I ought to have been sure of this. Very true, and you have shown much christian temper in bearing with my fears and apprehensions as you have done ; but yet, there is a way of preaching even this great and momentous truth, in a dry, cold, and unprofitable manner. I know a gentleman who does this ; and yet he agrees with me in opinion, perhaps more completely than you do on some points. I shall never forget how much his first sermon at M—— disappointed me. He had been just before talking with us in a most delightful way, explaining some difficult passage of scripture, and we walked to church full of kind and holy feelings ; and then I heard him preach a very correct, good sermon ; but when it was done, I said to myself, “ well, you may preach in this way to the day of judgment, and you will never move me nor any body else ; you will never bring one to cry “ What must I do to be saved ! ”

and then I thought of you ; and several times I caught myself wondering if your sermons would be of this stamp. Only imagine my delight in reading them now !

But I never told you of these private thoughts and speculations. I suppose I was afraid. You keep me so strict, that I am afraid to open my mouth but just as you please ? Another thing too ; I was afraid of being suspected of Calvinism. I am just as much of a Calvinist as you are, and not one bit more, only I do not like your bishop, and I did not before I knew what Calvinism was ; and I for my part cannot imagine what your friend Mr. C—— could mean, by saying that his name in the title-page would do the sermons good. I know this, that if I did not know the author, and had met with the book by accident, I should have been quite satisfied with the title-page, without going any further. I should have expected that the sermons would turn out to be of the same kind as Dr. N——'s and all that party. He you know was the most intimate friend the bishop had.

I have just received a letter from Mr. K——. What a mercy it is for me that your ideas about the composition of a letter are somewhat different from his ! He writes just as if his letters were to be produced in a court of justice, where he would be condemned and executed, if he were found guilty of any thing like tenderness or affection even in expression.

I have been very much shocked since I began this letter. Mrs. O—— has been at the point of death. Mr. O—— has never left her bed-side. He seems

cut to the very root, completely *heart-struck*, and looks like one who had seen some terrible thing at which he still stood aghast. And I have been one of the many who have often said "what a pity that he should have such a wife!" She could live without him, but I do not think his affectionate heart would survive her. May she be restored to him! "For some moments I thought she was really gone." I shall never forget the shuddering expression of his whole frame as he said this. We hope she is out of danger now.

Ever yours.

LETTER LXVII.

TO THE REV. E. T. V—.

My dear Friend,

Well, I really wonder what you do expect from me. I *must* complain of the injustice you do me.—"Not respect you!"—What can you find in my last letter that will bear you out in this accusation? I have sometimes thought that a person more confident of her power over you would suit you better; but then I have thought, I would not lose the respect and esteem which cause my diffidence, upon any consideration.—"I do not consult you upon points of faith and practice!"—I have no doubts, that I know of, to clear up.—"I used to apply to you!"—I should do so now, if I felt the same necessity; but you forget that, when I was in the habit of doing this, my mind was only just awakened to in-

quity as to the way of salvation. I had heard it many times before, but, up to a certain time, I had never applied the truths that I heard to myself. All seemed new to me. Every passage of scripture appeared in a new light. I was lost in wonder that these things had been so long hid from my eyes, and I wanted every day to apply, not only to you, but to every one about me, for instruction and explanation. It is not so with me now. My doubts are satisfied. I can *read* you know; and I believe that all which is necessary to salvation may be understood by every praying person. "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God:" I am satisfied with the "things that are revealed."

To tell you the truth, I am so sick of the differences of opinion, and the controversies among you reverend gentlemen, on points which seem to me of trivial importance, that I think, if I had any difficulties, I should feel little confidence in applying to any of you. I suppose it is something like conceit, but, do you know, I have often smiled to myself at the implicit faith which some poor simple souls put in their minister; and I have blest myself that I was not so priest-ridden; but I suppose it is better to be so; I am sure you all like it; and to tell you the truth, for I may as well speak my mind out at once, I think I owe something of the angry spirit of your last letter to this order of things about you.—Believe me, it is a very dangerous thing to mix only with persons who are very much below ourselves even in religious profession. This you must allow is your

state. As one of your congregation gaily observed, they "leave the care of their souls to *you*, and never think it necessary to take much notice of the road you are leading them." On any point of discussion that bears on religion they apply to you as to an oracle. They have no temptation to dispute your authority, for they are utterly careless about the whole matter. The mischief of this is very great, but it is rather hard that any should fall to my share. It seems however that, while the people about you are quite satisfied to have no opinion of their own, you think me very unreasonable if I do not adopt the same sort of quiet flattery.

Be satisfied it is not in my nature, and it is contrary to my principles to flatter any one, and above all you, whose soul is as dear in my sight as my own.—If I never apply to *you* for instruction, I am sure I never do to any one else; above all, I never applied to Mr. M——, as far as I can remember. On the contrary, I have ventured to think for myself; and though I never had the impertinence to tell him seriously that *I* thought him wrong, yet, believing myself to be more sober-minded, I have enticed him to read authors who have held contrary opinions to those upon which he insisted; and in one instance I venture to hope that this was of use to him. I had no other motive than the good of those who looked up to him, young and inexperienced as he is, for instruction.

I "try your belief by my own standard, which I consider infallible!" And is it *you* who think me so

self-opinionated? I would wish to think nothing but the bible infallible, and as far as my belief may be found consonant with that, I would wish to hold it still. I would not conceal from you that I think you cannot with safety pursue the course you now do. You mix always in gay and worldly society, and you avoid intimacies with professors of religion. Now this I find condemned in my bible; but I do not remember that I told you so in my last letter. I see we are not competent judges of ourselves. I always thought that one of *my* great faults was that of adopting the opinions of others, and sliding into the habits and sentiments of those about me, whereas you accuse me of bending others to my standard.

I “anticipate the public avowal of your sentiments with *terror*!” I think you must have perverted my meaning by adopting this expression. Anxiety and *fear*, I scarcely know of what, I certainly did feel, and should again; and it seems to me very natural. Had you published a book on any subject, had you done any thing in public, I should have received or heard it with equal trepidation. Not that I should have supposed you would not acquit yourself well; but there is a feeling, which I can find no other term than *fear* to describe, of which I cannot divest myself; yet it is quite free from any distrust of your abilities or sentiments.

To one of your charges I plead guilty. I have not the same opinion of your bishop which you hold. He *does* appear to me the enemy of all righteousness, because he stands opposed to all good things; and

I always remember with grief and regret, that you would not suffer me to read to you, or to show you, the mild and temperate observations which the Christian Observer had made on his charge. I should have been grieved to hear you speak with acrimony or disrespect of your own bishop, but surely you might hear his errors lamented with patience. One need not defend or adopt them because they are his. The bishop of N—— is not the pope though he *is* a bishop. I am sure no one wishes him better than I do; and no one more heartily wishes that he may be converted from the error of his ways. For this I prayed, when I read Mr. Gisborne's address to him on his attack upon the Bible Society, which I hope it was not heresy and schism to *look into*. I think, if he read it, he could hardly fail to be convinced that, if the Church is in danger, it is not from the Bible Society. How unaccountable it seems to me that the members of two Societies having the same object in view should be at variance.

What a tiresome thing it is to scold upon paper! Oh for the pleasure of scolding you to your face! The next time we meet I must prepare some abstruse point of divinity to discuss; must I? But seriously, would any one, who sees how peaceable we are when together, imagine that we could quarrel so eloquently on paper?

"I never had such fancies," you say, "till I had heard the powerful preaching of Mr. M——." I think I have heard enough of him in one way or other. You of all people have least cause to talk

about, or to suspect the power of other men. If indeed, when he went away, I had told you that "this parish had now lost its only charm in my eyes:" if he had taken upon himself to assure my friends that he "knew my affections were entirely his own; and that, whatever others might say, he was quite satisfied that I cared for nobody in the world so much as himself; and above all, that he knew I was not engaged to you:" then indeed, you might very reasonably have inquired who this person was who had such a key to my heart, and who thus took upon himself to answer for me; and how he came to be so accurately informed; but as it is, do not you see that you have no ground to stand upon? You have only to take shame to yourself, and wonder at *my* patience and forbearance.

For my own part, I do confess that I have no objection to see these little jealousies. If there were any foundation for them, I might be uneasy and resentful; but as it is, I only take them as a proof of continued interest and affection. I confess I should feel very differently on this subject as a wife. If *then* my husband could really suspect me of wandering even in thought from him; if he could suppose me capable of looking at another with admiration that belonged only to him, I do not think I should try to convince him of his error by argument; I should despair of convincing him by any means; I should mourn in secret over the injury he did me, and lament to the latest hour of my life the loss of his confidence and esteem.

Ever yours.

LETTER LXVIII.

TO THE REV. E. T. V—

My dear Friend,

Upon the whole I think I have escaped wonderfully well, considering that I have presumed to speak of the bishop of N—— in terms of disparagement. Perhaps I had better be satisfied, and not brave the danger again; but as I am a woman, and as this is, or ought to be, the day of my power, I will venture one more little word, just one more dying speech and confession, and then I have done. I only wish then to say, that all the sin of thinking this same bishop a secular character, and one who loves money above every thing else, lies at my own door. My opinion has never been influenced by any one here. I knew him—before you were born, I was going to say,—certainly before I knew that you were born. I remember him at twelve years old, for I was born in his neighbourhood. I do assure you he is not vilified by any body of my acquaintance. Nobody knows, and nobody cares, any thing about him here but myself. As to poor Mr. M——, I question if he knows that there is such a person in existence. I think I never heard him mention any bishop. Yes: I remember I once heard him laugh at his own bishop's stinginess in not allowing him more wine after dinner, when he went to be ordained; but that was nothing more than any other person might have done. He may

have a very profound respect for his office, though he thinks with other people that he is parsimonious at his table.

I never read the book of which you speak. I never trouble my head to consider whether people are calvinists or not. The only calvinists that I know are the I——s, and they certainly are a very holy as well as a very amiable family. I think they are servants of God ; and so I think was John Wesley, who was on the other side of the question ; in short, it seems to me that I have no prejudice for any particular sect or party. I see some people who appear more obstinately bent upon going to heaven than I seem to be ; they perhaps differ from me in many points ; they are besides, narrow-minded, vulgar, and uneducated ; no matter, I would bid them God speed ; let them follow their Master in whatever way *they* think right ; I never care what their opinions or prejudices may be ; what have I to do with them ? I think the poor dying creature I have just left is a proof of what I mean. It would be difficult to determine to what sect or party she belongs, but, in the midst of prejudice and narrow minded views, I think her heart is right, for there is a “ desire to do and to suffer the whole will of God.” She has served him in *her* way ; and her meek and humble spirit, which scarcely dares to hope on this side the grave, will I doubt not be “ accepted in the Beloved.”

I think our good bishop has been falsely accused, for indeed he seems as amiable as he is pious. I am sure he is a man of very tender feelings. In exam-

ining the Forest the other day to ascertain if they really wanted another church, he was led to the death-bed of one of the cottagers. Many circumstances conspired to make the scene distressing, and Mr. O—— said the bishop was quite overcome, and shed tears abundantly. Most of the great people about *us* are good as well as great. The duke and duchess of B——, for example, patronize every religious institution. Before I conclude this long *prose*, I will just say that you mistake in supposing that I shall ever urge you to preach extempore, for I have a decided preference for a written sermon. I should only want you to bear with patience the prejudices, and even the want of toleration, of your weaker brethren: I should never wish you to imbibe them.

What is the new light of which you speak? It has not reached us yet, but I suppose it will soon, for Mr. H—— says “we have a little of every thing.” Our doctrines depend so much on Mr. O——’s temper, and that is, alas! so irritable, that his flock, I fear, notwithstanding all his zeal, must not look to him for either belief or practice. Some months ago he attacked Calvinism. Now he is gone round, and we all hold “damnable doctrines,” because he will have it that we are Arminians; and we, poor creatures, I am sure had no idea what we were till he told us; nor can we imagine who puts these fancies into his head. Poor Mrs. H—— is quite appalled at the anathemas that he hurls at us. Mr. H—— says—“Never mind, my dear; whatever other people may be, or whatever they may say of

us, we *must* be *right*, for we are every thing: we have been to all points of the compass, and it is very hard if we are not right as well as wrong."

And now I have done this part of my subject, but, as you bear scolding so well, I think I will give you a little more. It seems then that nothing is to be believed to the prejudice of Mrs. S——, and Emily's account of her is not to be credited! But what if I prove to you that her account is in accordance with your own, which I could very easily do? The history of your flirtations never disturbed me for a moment when I first heard of them, for I was with you, and I felt my own power. But, when you write, and tell me again of this little vain creature; and when I sit alone, and have nothing else to do, I sometimes wonder if you are offering incense to the same idol, assuming all the appearance of devoted attachment to a woman whose head is full of nothing but dress, and whose heart is too cold even to love her own child.

You know you used to promise in former days, in the beginning of this lady's reign, that I should have the high privilege of one day seeing the "peculiar charm" of this "supremely fascinating creature," if I behaved well, and you ever made up your mind to take me for that "dull thing a wife." I said nothing, but I certainly did presume to feel that the felicity would not be quite so great as you expected; and now I will presume to say that, of the *two*, if obliged to choose, I would rather go to America than live near her. Not that I should suspect *you*. I

am well assured of your affection for me; but unluckily I am as well convinced of your admiration of her; and being totally opposite in character, and totally deficient in the charms which you and her husband discovered, I should never wish to be brought into competition or comparison with her. . Ah! how much she must have *now* that is exactly calculated to charm *you*! Her manners polished by an intercourse with the great, perfectly satisfied with herself, and confident of her power to please you! Amidst all *her* brilliancy and elegance will you remember *me*, who would rather shrink from every eye than play the highest part in public life, whose natural taste is only for quietness and retirement?—Well, we shall see. I only wonder that, confessedly admiring such characters as you meet with in the society which you frequent, you ever thought of me at all. Only think how patiently I have sat to hear your lavish praises of persons for whom I could feel nothing but disgust! Ah, you owe me a long debt of deep and tried affection. It is my day now, but I rather think I am stretching my prerogative a little. I have some misgivings that I am in the way to the house of correction, so I had better stop in good time.

Ever yours.

LETTER LXIX.

TO THE REV. E. T. V—

My dear Friend,

I am desired to send you good news from T——. Our dear Emily has been dangerously ill but is now recovered ; and I rejoice that you did not know any thing of her illness. She has been very near death in consequence of a cold taken in attendance upon the dear baby, and in forgetfulness of herself. She is even now too ill to write. The letter is from Mr. B——'s sister, and you would be pleased to see the affectionate manner in which she speaks of her sister-in-law. Her letter bears the mark of that elegance of manner which Emily told me distinguished all the family, but I will hope that there is something more. There seems so much warmth and kindness of feeling, that I should never suppose she could possess the violence of temper of which I have heard. She speaks of our friend in the highest terms, never calling her any thing but sister, or her dear sister. I really begin to think that Emily is very fortunate in her new relations.

And now for your letter. I think upon the whole you have been more moderate than I expected ; but surely your senses were fascinated when you wrote, for you seem to have forgotten "all time, all seasons, and their change." Six months you compute !—now we sober people reckon that, from the end of July to the end of March, is a period of eight months ; but as you wrote in the presence of Mrs. S—— no

wonder your faculties were a little bewildered. Seriously, I do consider it a matter of congratulation to myself that she is gone from your neighbourhood. I have suffered enough. I have heard enough of her, and she has said enough of me, on whom indeed she never set eyes; but she has been conceited enough to boast of her own power over you, and to doubt mine, and I have been foolish enough to suffer much real misery in consequence. You admit her folly, but you say I must do her justice, "still she is pure of heart." Indeed! I am sure I always thought that purity of heart would lead to purity of conduct; but now, it seems, the more incorrect a woman is in her manner, the more indelicate in her dress and actions, the more proof she gives of her innocence and purity!!! What a pure heart Catharine L—— must have! I remember her very improper behaviour at G——, where she behaved much in the same way as *you said* Mrs. S—— on one occasion did to you. I little thought what substantial proofs she was giving of her purity and innocence. And Mrs. C. V—— too, who is so innocent as to flirt with any man but her own husband, how innocent she must be, and how mistaken I have been all my life! Well, I have only to retrieve my errors. If ever I am married, I must look out for some unmarried man to flirt with in public, to talk of among his friends as a devoted lover, to call at his lodgings by myself; in short, to violate every rule of ordinary life, to step over all the boundaries, which I in my simplicity thought a mind of real delicacy would never fail to

observe ; all this I must do, and then I shall establish a character for purity, and it will be said that my very imprudence and incaution prove my innocence ! Mercy upon us ! what poor ignorant creatures we are in this country ! I am afraid I should look in vain for such a merciful judge as you are determined to be in this lady's case. The truth is, that when you like a person, nothing will open your eyes. You are wilfully blind, for you cannot think of her as you say, unless you stand opposed to every rule of conduct and propriety.

I am very much amused by your warm patronage of our new curate. Oh if you could but hear him ! I have held my peace, and defended him as a man of good conduct, and therefore respectable ; and moreover, because he is one of the "regular clergy," I have gone to hear his regular stupidity with scrupulous exactness ; and, as he seemed to fail more from a total want of ability than any thing else, I have been anxious to show a respect for his good intentions, and therefore have maintained my ground ; but I began to feel a little impatient when I heard that he boasted of our "being quite satisfied down here, now that he had lengthened his sermons by putting two into one !" Our poor people went very quietly to sleep while he told them that "they must be as good as ever they could, and that if they thought of going to Heaven they must be very careful to be quite virtuous and moral." To be sure we thought he was himself "the great sublime he drew," but somehow or other, he has been discovered to have made a gap

in the hedge which you say surrounds a clergyman. I have no longer any toleration for him. He has lost the only merit he ever possessed in my eyes, and I long for the time when we shall be delivered from him. I could never find any wit or brilliancy that could excuse a profligate, or make him any thing but odious in my estimation; and I am sure this silly man has nothing that can induce us to treat him with any thing but cold civility. Mr. O—— has been heartily ashamed of him ever since he came, and he only stays till Trinity Sunday.

Who do you think is coming in his place? Young Mr. I—— is to make his first essay upon us. I have known this some time, but it was a profound secret. I was expected to be quite out of my wits with joy at the news, but I bore it with great philosophy. My society was very agreeable to this gentleman once, lively, I may even say brilliant, in conversation; and he always gave me spirits, and animated me to get out of my sober self, and to “giggle and make giggle,” as Cowper says; but all is now changed; he has taken orders, and I am quite delighted to see the gravity of his deportment. I was anxious upon this point, for I should have really grieved if he had evinced the same carelessness of deportment, and the same laughing humour that he used to do. I was quite satisfied, and far be it from me to attempt to bring him back to his former manner.

I am writing this letter in the midst of great confusion. Pray have I ever told you that you may soon expect to find my letters dated from the county jail, for Mrs. H—— says we are all going there. I

would not speak of it, you may be sure, with levity if I thought she was right. Difficulties I have no doubt Mr. H—— finds, but I cannot believe they are very serious, because the moment he is gone on a journey she fills the house with carpenters, and masons, and painters. She always had a brick and mortar fever, but I was in hopes that here in the attics she would not molest us any more. She has fitted up no less than three school-rooms, since I came, in various parts of the house. The first was perfectly unexceptionable, but her passion for change and bustle moved us into another, which she would have it was better. I never think of opposing her, for besides that it would be of no use, I confess that I am rather amused. I smile when I see her eye fixed intently, for, as I tell her, I know there is some extraordinary project in her head, which she only wants opportunity to bring out. I took possession of the new school-room, and very charming she insisted upon it we should find it; unluckily the smoke would only escape through the window or door; the chimney was found to be incurable; another room was painted, and coloured green; and I vainly hoped that nothing would disturb our quiet possession. Alas! she has taken it into her head that we shall be painted brown, and that fifty other alterations shall be made; so here we are turned into one of the bed-rooms, books and slates, and maps and inkstands all on the floor. The worst of it is, all this is done to *please* us, and we are obliged to be pleased and thankful accordingly. I sit and sigh for the return of Mr. H——, the great

magician, who will reduce all this chaotic scene to order.

I am not sorry that you have learned to form a more correct judgment upon the character of Mrs. C——. I did not venture to say any thing while your imagination had carried you so far away, but Mr. K—— can tell you that my opinion was always the same. Women are in general more quick sighted in discerning character than men. The little note which flattered and pleased you so much, was sufficient to unveil her real intentions to me, and her subsequent letter convinced me of the gross indelicacy of her mind ; but you were drinking in the flatteries of the syren, and the vain attempt to open your eyes would only have served to irritate you. “Are you always to be deceived,” you ask, “are we none of us the pure excellent creatures that you fancy us?”—No ; we are human beings, sharing the same nature with yourself, and subject to the like infirmities. I never wish to deceive you, but you deceive yourself. You suffer your imagination to run away with you ; and who can help it ? If your affection for me depends upon your finding me a creature of your imagination, I fear it will vanish away like the early dew. I would rather you should think worse of me than better than I deserve. However do not be discouraged by the fearful example of the woman that you have now seen. This unhappy person is a monster of the species ; and you would be secure from ever being deceived by such, if you would only observe the conduct ; if, whenever you see the decencies of society

violated, and the boundaries of the sex overstepped, you would only take note of it: and, instead of thinking it harsh and uncharitable to pronounce judgment, stand steadily opposed to it; and if reproof is not availing, "from such turn away."

Ever yours.

LETTER LXX.

TO THE REV. E. T. V.—

My dear Friend,

There is something in the tone of your last letter that alarms me a good deal. You are suffering I fear from indisposition. You admit something of this kind in the latter part, but the vague and uncertain way in which you speak of it, is more terrific to my mind, than if you admitted that you were really ill. I do not like these dim shadowings. My fancy is soon at work to fill up the outline; and you would be surprised to learn what gigantic phantoms I conjure up out of the mist and darkness of uncertainty and suspicion. Tell me as soon as you can that I am wrong in my conjectures. Something I feel assured there is concealed from me. You used to tell me every thing that happened to vex and oppress you. Do not hesitate to do it now, from the fear of oppressing me with cares which I cannot dispel. It will do you good to unburthen your mind; and I shall be more at ease, than I am when I see you depressed in spirit, and yet concealing the cause.

I have just been reading a very touching letter

from a missionary at Sierra Leone, giving an account of the death of his wife in giving birth to her first child during the paroxysm of a fever. It is very simply told :—"thus God has fulfilled the desire which she has often expressed since our marriage, that she might die first: yesterday my child died too: we laid him in the arms of his mother: I am weak and feverish, and I could not follow them to the burying ground, but I shall go thither to weep." A note at the end of the letter reports that the missionary only survived the death of his wife and child a fortnight, having died of an illness occasioned by his grief. I cannot tell you how much this little tale has taken hold upon me. This then was the end of true and devoted affection, to die in a foreign land far from all their relatives and friends! Oh! what is life without the christian's hope? Its fairest flowers seem only born to wither. But no, they will bloom again and for ever in the Paradise of God, for they are planted by his own right hand.

There are some parts of your letter that you will expect me to answer. Believe me I was very far from intending to cast any ridicule upon the regular clergy, when I spoke as I did of our present curate. I should hope that there are few among you like him. I dare say you are all the while fancying that he is a very good man, only we find fault with him for being orderly. I only wish I could place him before you, and make him talk, that you might see at once his ignorance, his conceit, and his vulgarity. You never in your life heard such nonsense as he preaches: and,

would you believe that the first thing he does when he comes in, is to ask us with evident self-complacency what we think of his sermon? Mrs. H—— is the only person who attempts an answer; and he is not satisfied with a general one, but he goes on “and what did you think of such and such a passage? I assure you, miss,” he said, turning to me, “I never preach any body else’s sermons. I always make them all myself.”—“I am sure, sir, I never doubted it,” was the only answer I gave him. Mr. H—— turned to the window to laugh, and Mrs. H—— scolded me, after the man was gone, for looking contemptuous. She insisted upon it that she was the only one who behaved properly. “As for you, Mr H——, who talk so much about civility and kindness, I must say I admire you.” “Yes, my dear, you always did,” he says in his usual good-humoured way. But now, really, how is it possible to do any thing with such a man? I never imagined such a person before, nor can we conceive where Mr. O—— picked him up. I suppose it was, as the Catholics say, *pour nos péchés*, that he sent him here; and partly perhaps from the determination not to be outdone by his curate, as he has been in days gone by. I fancy nurse is nearer the truth in her conjectures than I at first thought. “Depend upon it, miss,” she said, “our parson got him *chep* out o’ *Yurkshire*.” My wonder is how he got ordained. But what have I to do with the man, only that you make a point of upholding him? Even Mr. O—— is ashamed of him, and nobody dares to mention his

name but myself. I sometimes, when I see that he is in the humour to bear it, laugh a little with him at the great "northern light" with which he has favoured us.

Our new curate, that is to be, carries it with a high hand. He has already signified that he will neither preach nor pray extempore, nor do any thing that is irregular and contrary to the rules of the established church.—What can you mean, my dear friend, by saying that you perceive I fully intend to amuse myself with him? He fully understands my situation; but if he did not, and I could be so weak, or so wicked, as to encourage, or take pleasure in his or any man's attentions, I should look upon myself as brought down to the level of Mrs. L——, or any other such person. The inclination or principle would be the same, though the result might not be so disgraceful.

Yes, I must confess, I rejoice in the removal of the duke and duchess of C—— from your neighbourhood; on *your* account I rejoice; and since you encourage me to say so, I need not conceal it. I am afraid you are right in saying that I am prejudiced against great people. I never supposed that there might not be many of them very amiable, but I am so much inclined to look upon their station as dangerous to their best interests, that, when I remember Him who chose his followers from among the poor of this world, I am more disposed to pity than to envy their honours. I bear in mind the declaration of holy writ, "not many mighty, not many noble, &c." and I am too apt to class them all together. There

seems to me something in the pomp and glitter of their station but too well calculated to obscure and hide from them the end. I have always felt afraid of that magic circle; but I hope I am inclined to honour in my heart all those who are conspicuous for their worth as well as their rank. As for such as you describe, I must say I do not feel at all disposed to respect them for the high station which their conduct does not adorn, nor am I ambitious of such society. I should not like to be the *humble* friend even of a duchess.

Do not mistake me. I can very well conceive that for you it is very different, but—forgive me, I have sometimes wondered if the habitual intercourse with these elevated ranks was quite calculated to promote your happiness in the more humble walks of life. I have sometimes thought, that the constant sight of luxury and affluence was not the best school in which to learn how to bear the privations of a limited income. My father had your taste and habits. Before he was married, he lived much among the great, and when he came to his own quiet parsonage, he found it very hard to bear the retirement and frugality of private life. He had no society suitable to his taste, and with a wife whom he always loved, he was all but restless and unhappy.

The sober picture which you draw of our married life would I think be realized. I am always glad when I see that you are not run away with by imagination. I never feel any doubt of my power to make and to be happy in quiet retirement when I am with

you. And would your wife be more dear to you, if she was *honoured* with the notice of a lady Sarah F——? If you could even be satisfied to trust *her* in such society, what would you think of introducing a daughter there? I happen to know more of this unhappy woman than you suppose, and I *know* that she is not admitted into *good* society. She pays visits to the abbey in this neighbourhood, where you know there is no lady. It was under her auspices and patronage, that the owner of that wicked mansion effected the ruin of a young lady in this neighbourhood, of a highly respectable family, but whose friends thought it a fine thing for her to be amongst the great; and as lady Sarah F—— was not then so notorious as she is now, they suffered her to take this poor girl with her on a visit there. After her return she was sanguine enough to believe that her betrayer would not consign her to disgrace and misery, and she wrote to him. It was said that the application was very amusing to the gentleman; but when she found that to him the whole affair was nothing more than a common frolic, her grief and despair knew no bounds. She was sent away from her family and has never returned. Can you wonder that I should have some prejudice against great people? Besides this, at a very early age I was on a visit to a lady whose husband was standing a contested election. She took me with her to a great house, the mistress of which, though she was only the daughter of an earl, brought with her all the vices of a profligate court. I cannot to this day look back on that visit

without a feeling of horror and disgust. They played at billiards on Sunday. I had never till then seen or known any thing that could shock a young and virtuous mind ; and the total want of principle and good feeling which was shown in every thing, completely horrified and disgusted me.

This letter, I should think, is sufficiently long to satisfy you. Let me hear soon that you are restored to health, or to your usual tranquillity.

Ever yours.

LETTER LXXI.

TO THE REV. E. T. V—.

My dear friend,

I rejoice to find that my fears were without foundation. I do not often trouble you with my dreams, but one that I have had lately made an unaccountable impression upon me. I thought I was in company with a man, who told me that you had been discovered in the commission of some deadly crime, and that he was ordered to shoot you with the pistol which he held in his hand. I was, it would seem, in a very sublime fit of heroics, for I fell on my knees, and entreated him to shoot me instead of you. He very civilly told me that he had no objection, but he had received no orders for any one but you ; and he prepared to go to an inner room where you were. I struggled to prevent him, and awoke as much exhausted as if it had really happened. I

suppose your heavy misdemeanor was caused by Mrs. H——'s hot supper ; but I beg you will take account of it, and believe, as the nurses say, that “ a little bird gives me private information of all your naughty tricks.”

You may imagine that this dream has had an unaccountable power of shaking my nerves, or else you might suppose that I should find your new prospect of taking a pupil ample matter to descant upon. I am glad and I am sorry. You well know that I am glad, if it gives you the power of looking forward to any definite time, or if it facilitates our meeting ; but then, I cannot contemplate the confinement and sacrifice that it will be to you, without many a sigh of regret and sorrow. I remember my first essay in teaching, and I grieve for you. In some respects however the case is totally different. I was incapable, and the greatest part of my *miseries* sprang from that ; you are all-sufficient. But I am thinking only of the confinement, and the trial of patience. I should be very thankful too for another pupil for you, because you would find it much less irksome than the society of one. One other feeling of regret I had, because it seems as if this plan would prevent our meeting this summer as you proposed. My vacation will be made to suit Mrs. H——'s convenience, and it is settled to be in the vacation of the schools. It is on many accounts the best time. My sisters will then be at liberty ; and oh ! what a joyous meeting we shall have ! If my mother saw fit to invite you, do you think you could come ? I am by

no means certain that it will be done, for I plainly see that they are all frightened out of their wits about you.

The spring is come, as you say, and we very much differ in our feelings about it. I always seem to revive with it, and the sight of the flowers, and the singing of the birds, give me new life. This is from early association, and from a natural love for the pleasures of a garden. I have not half so much pleasure however this spring as I used to have. A gardener has been employed to trim up my own little garden, and to sow the seeds; and I like better to see the work of my own hands. Besides which, I have to accuse *you* of curtailing my pleasures in this instance. Yes, innocent as you may think yourself, it is true. All last spring and summer I was pining for moss roses and dwarf honey-suckles. A man down by the river has some, and I promised myself to plant some at Michaelmas. In the mean time I went to G——, where you know I met you and many other of my friends; and this so dissipated my mind, that, when I came home, I had no taste for my quiet every-day enjoyments. I never cared about the moss-roses, or even thought of them, except to wonder how I could ever have felt any interest about such things. Now the spring is come again, and I am vexed with my own folly in not preparing myself this pleasure.

I have heard from S——. Mrs. B—— is better, but still weak; and the baby is very delicate. “Tell me,” she says, “all your plans and prospects.

How goes on your M——shire interest?" What an odd expression! As if I were standing for the County; or as if I had two or three speculations of the same sort, and it did not much signify which of them succeeded, or who was my husband at last! I know she did not mean it, but this offensive expression I caught myself repeating several times in the day.

It was Mrs. C——'s flattery of *you* that disgusted me so much, yet I believe I could bear a pretty large dose of that, if it had been mingled with any skill or delicacy; but her flattery is so gross, so nauseating, that I used to wonder that it should excite any thing in you but displeasure and disgust. I scarcely ever heard any person praise you without setting them down for persons of greater discernment than I had ever before supposed them. How delightful the sober judicious praise of Mr. K—— used to be in my ears! I never recollect that *I* said any thing in your favour; yet, when I looked at him, I saw by the half-suppressed smile, that I had betrayed the pleasure he gave me, when I only thought I was exhibiting myself as a cool impartial judge. Yet do not imagine that I want such excitements to affection: nor was it a high idea of super-human excellence that first drew, and now binds me to you. It was a sympathy of taste and feeling which I can truly say I have never seen in any other. I well remember the time when my heart was as free as a bird. No man particularly interested me, nor woman either. I wondered if any body thought and felt like me. Emily was the first woman; and then you

came, and seemed to have the key to every thought and feeling. I remember her asking me if I had ever seen you, and then saying, "oh ! you will like each other so much when you meet."

Farewell.

LETTER LXXII.

TO THE REV. E. T. V—.

My dear Friend,

I had a presentiment that your next letter would destroy the hopes which you had encouraged me to form. On some accounts I rejoice that you are relieved from the irksomeness of a *single* pupil, yet I feel that I ought not to look forward to our emancipation so soon as you seem to think we may. I rather envied a couple in this neighbourhood, who dared to marry under the same circumstances that we should be in ; but, since I have seen their beginning, I have been even more afraid than I was before. They have dashed at once into matrimony with a house and seventy pounds a year. He *means* to take pupils, but it does not yet appear that any body means to send them. She sat up to receive her visits dressed in the most extravagant manner, covered with lace, and white satin, and bows of ribband. Mr. O—— said he fancied himself in the presence of the Princess Charlotte. The great people in the place have laughed at her for it ; and when she returned their visits, she was purposely received with the most

chilling coldness, as a woman who would very soon bring her husband into difficulties.

You will fancy that my indifference to dress will be henceforth confirmed. I fancy my dear Sophy has imbibed your fears. She seems to expect that I shall appear before them in a Welch hat, and a blue flannel gown, and she gives me some gentle hints ; but adds, in her usual way, "do not trouble yourself about altering any thing ; I shall soon set you to rights, when I have once begun taking you to pieces ; I am finishing all my own work quickly, that I may have nothing to do but adorn you." You would be delighted to know the happiness she feels in the prospect of seeing me. "Now I know that it is certain," she says, "I feel as if this place was not large enough to contain me. I want every minute to jump about, and tell all the people I see, that my beloved sister is really coming." I wish you knew this dear ardent creature, and all who are near and dear to me.

I should be very sorry if I thought you would have the same restless habits after marriage as Mr. L——. He used in former days to say he knew of nothing so destructive of human happiness as a disposition of this kind.

Oh, how I should fail in patience if I were Emily ! Only think of her careless husband ! Two months ago I received a letter from Mary, a servant of Mr. T——'s, who used to wait upon us in the school-room. She was anxious to leave her present place. Another was offered, but she remembered the affection she had conceived for me, and wrote to ask if

the lady I was now with wanted a servant, and offering to serve in any capacity. She is a most affectionate, good creature, and I knew that she would value kind treatment more than any thing else. I thought directly of Emily, who attaches all her servants to her; and when I remembered Mary's cleverness and her smart appearance, and above all, when I remembered the contrast between her cheerful alacrity and obliging temper, and the sulky reluctant service of that Miss Kitty, I made no doubt of her giving satisfaction, and in fact proving quite a treasure. She is an orphan, and was brought up by a good lady, who died suddenly, and left her ill-prepared to struggle with the world. I was full of hope, and wrote to Emily. She wanted exactly such a person, wrote an answer directly, and gave it to her husband to put into the post-office. He wore out the letter in his pocket. Poor Mary in despair accepted another and a doubtful place, and Mrs. B—— only discovered the fragments of the letter last week. Really people who think only of themselves are worse than useless in the world. They are the pests and scourges of society.

Ever yours.

LETTER LXXIII.

TO THE REV. E. T. V—

My dear Friend,

It seems a long time since I heard from you. So many things have happened to mark the time, that it appears much longer than it really is. I can scarcely believe that I am now writing in the same room with my beloved sisters. I sit, and wonder how I have lived so long away from them. You have never seen any one of my relations. It seems as if I were smuggling you into the family. You must come now and see them. Your friends, who fancy that you would never be induced to marry but for high connexion, would find themselves mistaken. Yet I am very proud of my sisters, proud of seeing them support themselves in virtuous independence; and many a time since I have been here, my heart has exulted to find how much they are beloved and respected, and how correct they have been in their conduct. How thankful I ought to be to a gracious God, who has preserved them hitherto from every danger to which youth and innocence are exposed! Two or three families that we know, of the same standing as ourselves, and born to higher prospects, have sunk to the lowest depth of degradation.

Mary is better than I expected to find her. I have no fears but her gentle kindness will soon find the way to your heart. You will be longer perhaps in knowing Sophy, who is all ardour and affection.

I have never seen or met any one in the world with such a total absence of selfishness, such a noble rising above every thing that is mean in character and disposition. I wish she may be as unrestrained before you as she is with me. I have done little else but laugh ever since I came, she amuses me so much ; but this is only visible in the family circle, and I must not expect it till she knows you. She has been fighting hard this morning for some family plate which she wishes me to have. My mother says very significantly "let her be married first." I rest in perfect security on your constancy and honour, but my mother cannot be persuaded that you are not like other men, and I know in her own mind she thinks I stand a very poor chance. Every seasonable opportunity that she can find, she tells me of treacherous men and broken hearted women, and with the best intentions in the world endeavours to prepare me for your infidelity. I seldom say much on these occasions. I smile in the pride of my heart sometimes, but yet, without intending it, she is but little aware how much this annoys me. In the hope of so soon seeing you, I may finish this letter, and you will pardon its unusual shortness.

Farewell.

LETTER LXXIV.

TO THE REV. E. T. V—.

My dear Friend,

I shall not see you then ! This is the only idea that presents itself to my mind. I had not prepared myself for this disappointment. We had talked of your coming so much ; we had left so many things to be done then ; and we all seemed to depend upon it so entirely, that I forgot the uncertainty of it. Well, I shall not have to endure the misery of another parting : but then, I shall not have remembrances to dwell upon for the coming year.

Every body in the house is very angry. Sophy made me laugh in the midst of my disappointment, “and was it for this I saved all my best things, would not wear my flounced gown all this week, nor eat the soft cheese ?” I am to tell you that she is out of all patience with our prudence, and calculations, and talking of next year. “We may all be dead by next year,” she says, “for her part she does not choose to see you next year, she is engaged.” I have never seen this dear girl in better health and spirits. Her heart is as light and free as air. What she says in jest is really true, “that she has never met with any man who deserved her.”—“Then why,” said Mary, “do you permit the attentions of men ?”—“Oh, they are due to me as a young woman ; and besides, I like to know whom I might have had.” Of course this is not serious, and rather said to as-

tonish Mary's meekness than any thing else. Yet many people might mistake her character. She has very strong affections, but she is quite free from that sort of passionate disposition which would make her "fall in love," as the common phrase is. All men are indifferent to her. If you observe the female characters that fall in your way, you will find that a woman of strong passions has always a cold heart. I do not know if the rule is the same with the other sex, but I have never seen an exception to it in my own. A woman of fiery passions is happily a monster, and she is invariably destitute of natural affection.

I am afraid by the tone of your letter that you have been sadly annoyed in trying to arrange matters for coming to see me. "You should be quite well if you had peace of mind: you only want to contribute to my happiness." What is it that robs you of your peace of mind? Is it, as I fear, that you know your marriage would be imprudent at any time? Do not let one thought of this kind disturb your peace. Whatever other people may think, I am careless on that point. I rest quite satisfied in your affection, and the whole world could not disturb my confidence. Whether we ever marry or not, be assured that you have been the star of my destiny, the light that has shone on my dreary path, and cheered me on my way. What a blessing and consolation has the remembrance of your constant disinterested affection been to me! Why then should you repine.

I repeat, if we never marry, you have nothing to reproach yourself with.

With respect to the proposal you make about Christmas, I neither accept nor reject it. It would be poor affectation in me to raise obstacles on such an occasion, but your determination appears sudden, and perhaps you will when the time comes find it expedient to wait yet a little longer. There is ample time however to consider, so I need say nothing more positive about it now.

My dear Sophy leaves us on Wednesday. I think I have not given you a just impression of this most dear girl, but I am sure you will love her when you know her. She seems to me worth all of us put together. Every body loves her ; and I attribute this to the absence of selfishness in her ; for she has too much sense and spirit to be so compliable and passive as some mawkish people that I know of, who are called very sweet creatures because they swim with the tide, and are too indolent to oppose it, let it carry them where it will. I am glad that my dear Sophy is in a family where she is beloved and highly respected. I dined there last week, and was delighted to see how much the children, servants, master, and mistress, look up to and respect her ; and well they may. I think I shall never again complain of my fatigues in the school-room. There are seven children, and she not only teaches them most conscientiously, but she buys and makes all their clothes. Their mother knows no more of their things than I do. How it is all done I cannot imagine, but so it

is. One comfort is, that she is so amazingly quick in every thing that she does, that, as Mrs. T—— says, “she makes a thing whilst other people are thinking about it.”

Last Sunday, I think, was one of the most tranquil happy days that I have ever known. We were quite alone. Mr. and Mrs. T—— were out the whole day, and we had no one to interrupt us but the children, who are very orderly, and very sweet little creatures. In the evening we walked down the meadows, and through the beautiful woods that belong to Sir John T——’s preserves, till we reached the vista. How delighted you would have been with this fine old-fashioned vista! It is half a mile in length, and after walking through it we rested under a fine dark oak tree, in a place where the low brush-wood had been cut away to display the shape of the fine oaks that form a canopy over the head. You would have been charmed with the deep solitude and silence of the place, which seemed to be disturbed by nothing but the flapping wings of the pheasants. “Here,” said my poor Sophy when we left the seat, “here I shall come to think of you,” and she turned away to hide her tears.

I shall not see my oldest friend Mrs. L——. Her husband is hypochondriacal, and she is entirely confined to his sick room. It is a miserable marriage, I understand. She wrote a very kind letter to me. She does not complain, it is not in her nature, but there is a melancholy about what she says that affects me very much. She bids me write, “for my letters

remind her of happy days for ever gone;" and she tells me that "she brought away to her new residence the flowers I gave her, which she still cherishes." She is a proof, if I wanted any, that happiness does not consist in human splendour.

Ever yours.

LETTER LXXV.

TO THE REV. E. T. V—.

My dear Friend,

I should like to see you just now, if it were only to laugh at you for the consistency of your two last letters. In one you urge and beseech me to consent to our marriage at Christmas, and even show an angry spirit at my supposed prudential objections. In the next you give me the best of all possible reasons for deferring it till the ensuing summer! It is very well for me that I never for a moment admitted the idea of yielding to your entreaties; and it is still better for me that I perfectly understand you, and rely upon you with such entire confidence, that I question if any thing could disturb it. I fancy however that I am the only one in this house who does you so much honour. When I announced the contents of the letter I was somewhat amused at the difference of feeling amongst us. I neither suspect nor fear you. My mother did not say much, but I knew, by the manner of stirring her tea, what she thought. I watched her till she looked up, and then I burst

out laughing. She laughed too, but I rather think, at that moment, she fancied herself the wiser of the two.

* * * * *

You think Sophy ought to marry if she has a good offer. She has had that, at least what the world calls good, but the character of the man was not perfectly unexceptionable in a moral point of view, and she said, "I will never marry any man who does not inspire me with respect, and I am sure an immoral man I should always despise."—"You must go out of the world then, before you will find a husband to answer your high requisitions," was said to her. "And so I will," she answered, "for I have no horror of being an old maid."

When I write again it will be at S——.

Farewell.

LETTER LXXVI.

TO THE REV. E. T. V——.

My dear Friend,

What a long journey have I taken since I wrote last! It seems like a dream to look back upon the last six weeks. I brought my dear Sophy as far as London. I thought the journey would do her good, and that she would better bear the pain of parting in a place where there were objects that *must* distract her attention. I think it was right, but the pain at last was very great. She has great command over herself, and she did not suffer

me to see her quiet tears on the morning of my journey, but she accompanied me to the inn from whence the coach set out, and after the agony of a silent parting, I gave way to my own grief which had been painfully restrained. The coach stopped about half way down the street for some minutes, when one of the passengers touched my arm and pointed to the window. I raised my head, and saw my poor Sophy's face all bathed in tears. She had run down the street when the coach stopped, to take one more sorrowful look. We soon went on again, and I was left to my own reflections, and to recover from my fatigue, which by the bye I found impossible. I kept up till I reached this place, and then I thought a night's rest would restore me, but in the morning I was seriously ill. It is all over now, and therefore not worth detailing, except as a proof that I cannot bear walking exercise like other people. One comfort I anticipate in being married is, that I shall not be forced to walk above what I am able. I have many times undertaken walks that I knew would be more than I could bear, because every body wondered what was the reason that I could not use my legs like other people.

The concluding part of your letter makes me very uneasy. You speak as if my dear Sophy were too strict in her ideas of the morality of her lover. She only feels as I do, and as I think every virtuous woman does on this point. There cannot be a more false idea than that which I know some men entertain, that women are not displeased with profligacy in the

other sex. My very soul rises up in indignation against this libel on women. If there is one thing on earth that is abhorrent to my mind it is a profligate man. I know of nothing so disgusting except a profligate woman. You have yet been spared amidst your perilous walk. God be praised for it ! but you walk so fearlessly into temptation, that I cannot help trembling. I know who has said, "my grace is sufficient ;" but then, it has also been said, "thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." I cannot help thinking that you have done, and are still doing, this, when you tell me that a sentimental libertine will always have a place in your affections. I am almost ready to say, "stop a little and let me make room for her." We cannot occupy the same place, that is very clear. Her sublime bombast will never do with my sobriety of mind, so I would not advise you to bring us together.

Oh, if there was but a little common sense and plain judgment brought into play with these refined ladies, who profess to be all feeling, and who in reality have no feeling for any one but themselves ; who, under the mask of the vilest hypocrisy, trample on the happiness of others, and spread desolation and death around them ; if they had only a little plain dealing shown them, how much good it would do ! Why should there be so much tolerance and pity shown ? Do *they* show any pity, any mercy ! I consider it a christian's duty to prevent as much as possible the spread of evil. If this fair lady had been dealt with, as Mrs. E—— served one of the same

kind in her own house, how much misery might have been spared ! She saw her trampling on the peace of a wife by very questionable behaviour with her husband, and she immediately wrote to her father, and desired him to fetch her home. The lady wept, and protested, and went into hysterics. "She was sure there was no harm done ; she had only done so and so."—"You were only doing what any other unprincipled woman would do," said Mrs. E——, "but I am determined you shall not finish your work in my house, nor shall you ever enter it again by my consent." This may seem harsh, but only suppose that she had suffered this young lady to go on, would not the consequences have been more cruel even to her, than this timely severity, which perhaps saved her ? At all events, if it did not save *her*, it saved others. Instead of this, I hear of pity for such vice, and want of principle, and even of affection. Spare me this, I beseech you, or be warned in time. Our characters are too opposite to be brought together. One must reign *alone*, and whichever reigns will depose the other.

Yours, &c.

LETTER LXXVII.

TO THE REV. E. T. V—

My dear Friend,

I am glad you acknowledge that I am right in my reasoning. I lose my patience when I see vice deprived of its odious colours under the varnish of the French school of sentimentality. I am always sorry too, when I hear people, who are deceived by their own kindness of disposition, talking of the necessity of being charitable in our judgment of others, and so on. Nobody can dispute the point. I hope I should be amongst the last who would be severe to the returning prodigal, but then I must see proof that the penitence is real. I will never be persuaded to lend a hand to one, who continues to dwell in the pit of vice to which she has sunk, and whose only aim in life seems to be to draw others in. "Let the wicked forsake his way," and no christian will refuse comfort and support. Still, let the line be drawn. A true penitent will never seek to take her place in society again. If once forfeited, it is gone for ever. This law will not seem harsh to a mind of any delicacy. You say I speak as from a high and lofty eminence. I am not aware of attaching any merit to myself for remaining on a height which I never felt the slightest temptation to leave, but I am sure if I had, I should seek to hide myself in the shade for ever. But enough on this painful subject.

I have just been delighted with Miss Taylor's

“Display.” I wish we had more such writers as she is. I do not know that the love of display is very predominant in me, and I have always tried to educate all my pupils in a method opposite to the usual one, still I found a little wholesome whipping on some other points.

You would triumph over me and poor Mr. M——. You would be very much edified to see the behaviour of our present curate. He seems to have taken it into his head that Mr. M—— infected us all with some mania, which he shall catch if he permit himself to be much with us. We are no longer told from the pulpit that “one spark of grace will never be lost.” The prevailing bent of all his sermons is to tell us that “only they who endure unto the end shall be saved” and that “without holiness no man shall see the Lord.” In short, we have no longer the highly-spiced cordials that we have been accustomed to swallow, but good plain practical sermons.

Miss T—— complains that she finds no comfort in his sermons. Certainly there is no Calvinism. All this you will approve, and so do I; but I am sure you would not approve of his manner out of the pulpit. As soon as the service is over, he wraps his gown round him, and passes through the crowd, neither looking at, nor speaking to, any one, but having all the appearance of a person who was terribly afraid that some one would lay hands on him, if he did not make haste. I do not blame him for avoiding familiarities with a certain class of his hearers, but his manner is cold and haughty to all,

at least they think so. A poor woman spoke to me of a dying person who ought to be visited. I referred her to the curate. She hesitated, and at last said, "he seemed such a proud gentleman, and it was a very poor place to ask him to go to," in short she was afraid. I told him of the man. He was out of the parish, therefore he could not go. Now, Mr. M—— went wherever he was asked. In short, it will be long before they cease to compare them together, and regret as a common loss him who is gone.

Ever yours.

LETTER LXXVIII.

TO THE REV. E. T. V——.

Alas ! my dear Friend, when will you lose the habit of disbelieving every one who bears testimony which is not agreeable to your wishes ? How long will you shut your eyes to the evidence of your own senses, and call evil good ? I will say no more on this point, for I see that you are predetermined not to believe any thing that is said. I will only observe that my dear Sophy's information came from persons in no degree interested either to exaggerate or conceal the truth ; and their evidence is sufficiently borne out by facts and consequences, which cannot be denied or excused by any one else. I speak not in anger but sorrow, and I leave the subject for ever.

You tell me it is impossible for any one to be under such preaching as Mr. M——'s without being the worse for it, and that his society is very undesirable.

I am not aware of its being possible to receive any harm from his conversation, but, as it seems very disagreeable to you, I have entirely avoided him.—He came here very unexpectedly the other day, and told us much of his success in his new residence. It seems he has gained much applause, and it has done him much harm, for his Calvinism is now beyond all bounds, and he has had, it seems, an admonitory letter from our mild and excellent bishop. Mr. O—— has heard of this, and insists upon it that he shall not preach in any church or chapel of his, but he puts all the odium of this measure on his curate, for whom I felt very much the other evening. An immense crowd was collected from all parts in the hope of hearing their old favourite, and you never saw disappointment so manifest as theirs, when they saw him sitting quietly amongst them, and taking no part in the service. Their murmurs were “not loud but deep,” and there was one gentle heart that rejoiced in the testimony they gave. You will guess that I mean Miss W——, on whose account this unexpected visit is made. Our curate was very pale, and evidently much agitated, but he remained with us after service, as if to show Mr. M—— that he had no personal antipathy to him, though he had been obliged to refuse him the pulpit.

We are all uncomfortable. Miss W——’s father and brother dislike Mr. M—— as a lover of hers, therefore he is not *there* but *here*, that is, he takes his meals here. Then Mr. H——, knowing this objection of the father and brother, is angry with Mrs. H—— for having invited him, and he says *I* ought to talk

to Miss W——. On the other hand, Miss W—— wishes I would talk to her brother about his dislike to Mr. M——; he would mind what I say. This I positively decline doing, but I do talk to *her*, not with any hope of turning her from her purpose, but in obedience to Mr. H——; and in compliance with your wishes I avoid all intercourse with Mr. M——. Miss W—— wonders how I can like to sit up here so much, but I tell her truly that I like it better. I like it, because I think it is in conformity with your wishes, that I should avoid society which you dislike; and I perfectly agree with you that we soon acquire the taste, and inclinations, and manners, of those with whom we associate! Is not the danger still greater if we take pleasure in their company? Shall not we in such a case soon lose our horror even of vice? We see but few people in this retired place, and therefore I hope you will duly estimate the sacrifice I make when I debar myself from seeing the only visitor we have had for a long time.

Ever yours.

LETTER LXXIX.

TO THE REV. E. T. V——.

My dear Friend,

I said I would write to you to-day, and so I will, though I have a *few temptations* to amuse myself in another way, but they are not very difficult to overcome. My mind is more amused

than it is in general; but nothing touches my heart like an occupation that relates to you, so you are always safe from being neglected, whatever may be my amusements.——Our house has been enlivened ever since I wrote last by the company of the Miss H——s, and Mrs. T—— and her brother, to whom the elder Miss H—— is on the point of marriage; and our time is taken up in visits to Mr. T——'s family, and in receiving them in return; for this is all the neighbourhood we have within reach. To-morrow, or next day, part of our company will leave us. I shall be very sorry, for I do not expect any thing more to enliven the dreary days of winter, but I have plenty of employment so that I shall not sink into ennui.

I think I told you that I was uneasy at the long silence of Mrs. B——. I began to think that the baby might be ill again, so I wrote to enquire. I have just got an answer. She says, "the sight of your hand writing gave me a joyous feeling that I have long been a stranger to." Yet she gives me a most delightful account of her happiness in her baby. The house is full of company, but she finds no pleasure like that of attending upon her little boy. Mrs. B—— insists upon it that I shall be married from her house, and that I shall contrive to give her a long time beforehand. This will be very agreeable to me. There is another thing which Emily tells me which I rejoice in very much. You recollect my telling you how much I was delighted with the manner of her sister-in-law's letter, when she wrote to me; and

I could not help sighing to think that such an amiable person should be living without God in the world. Well, Emily tells me that she is become a changed character, feeling sincerely the importance of religion, and the vanity of those things which before entirely absorbed her. "I never saw," she adds, "any thing like her activity amongst the poor, and her anxiety to bring forth fruits." This is very delightful. God grant that she may go on and prosper!

I shall be very sorry when Miss W—— is gone. She is a very agreeable woman, and very kind to me, and fond of the children, and she is satisfied with my management of them. Mrs. T—— says she never saw such orderly good children in her life. Their aunt is so pleased with them for being fond of reading! She sees the difference between them and the one who has been educated at school, who never looks into a book. These children are ready to devour books, and I must say I am a little proud of it, for nobody can dispute that it is my work.

Miss H—— made me a little sad the other night. She is a sensible woman, and accustomed to have her opinions received with deference; so she delivers them just as if it were quite impossible for her to be wrong. She was laying it down as an axiom, that if a man could be absent a whole year from the object that he professed to love, his affections were not worth having; nor did she believe that it could be love. I felt myself blush all over, so I was half afraid to speak upon a subject which interested me so much. However I ventured to say something in behalf of

the gentleman of whom she was speaking; but she overpowered me with arguments, and proofs; "and besides, she had a few more years over her head than I had, and a little experience in these matters, and she would not give a pin for such love, and she was sure she should never depend upon it, and she thought they were fools who did." "So then I am a fool," I said to myself when I had retired to my own room, "nothing can have been more clearly proved." And I sat up, very wisely thinking of all the things that might prevent our meeting again, and of all the possible circumstances which might prevent me from ever seeing you again with pleasure.

I think I never was so thankful for any thing as for the arrival of your pupil. He must of necessity take up your time; and I rejoice to find that you like him so much, and that he promises so well. I pray for *you*, and I pray that the heart of the person you speak of, may be touched by the power of divine grace. Nothing else I have been long convinced will do. Nothing else will put an end to this "unreal mockery" of faith and prayer and repentance, while she is yet a stranger to the power of religion; while she is nursing her sins, and only seeking occasions to gratify her improper inclinations. I am afraid even this does not disgust me so much as the duplicity of her conduct, which never for a moment deceived *me*; but men are very easily taken in, and especially when they shut their eyes, and believe nothing that they hear.

Ever yours.

LETTER LXXX,

TO THE REV. E. T. V—.

My dear Friend,

It is a very comfortable consideration that, however highly my fears may be raised, you can always *talk* me out of them : I will not say *reason* me out of them, because you do not convince me that I am wrong.

“He that’s convinced against his will,

“Is of the same opinion still.”

I dare say you are thinking this will suit my case, but I flatly deny it. I am very willing to be convinced of my own amazing power, and your fidelity, &c., but you fail in substantial proof; however I am quieted, and hope to be so for the future. I must say I rejoice that you no longer see that any spiritual benefit can result from the counsels or advice of any one. I despaired from the first. These “fine sensibility women,” as Mr. G—— used to call them, are the most unlikely of all people to be effectually touched by the *sober* truths of religion. They are so covered over with fine German morals and sentimentality, that one can never get at them. The same cares bestowed upon a simple *honest* heart might perhaps have been blest by the conversion of the soul to God.

I think you have fixed the time of our meeting too soon; I mean sooner than you will be able to take the journey. I shall never throw difficulties in your way; but I should like to accommodate myself to the

convenience of Mr. and Mrs. H——, who have been so kind to me. I only came here for a year at first, and I have remained so long, that I do not think of leaving them without pain. It is delightful to me to see that they are fully satisfied with the children. Indeed the boys are very forward, far beyond the brother who has been at school.

We are all now left to ourselves, the company is gone, and we are as stupid as usual. Mrs. H—— has done nothing but congratulate herself upon it ever since. I felt quite vexed with her, but, poor woman, she had all the trouble of them, and I had nothing but the pleasure, so it is no wonder that we should feel differently. Besides all the trouble of providing for such a family, she was sometimes kept up till two o'clock in the morning, talking with the sisters, who have set themselves in array against their elder sister's marriage. Mr. T—— is very good-looking and entertaining, and a reading man. She cares nothing about books, but she is a very sensible woman, and interests me a good deal. He very much admired Miss W——, and I think would have been really and seriously in love with her, if he had not been engaged. She had quite a repugnance to him, and I was very much amused to hear Miss H—— ask her seriously what she thought of him. I knew what she thought, and knowing all the integrity and simplicity of her mind, I wondered what answer would be given. She hesitated. The question was repeated with increased anxiety, and an entreaty not to scruple saying what she thought. With admirable sincerity and delicacy, Miss W—— said very

quietly, "I must beg you to excuse my giving you any opinion upon such a subject." Truth and nature are always the best guides.

Ever yours.

LETTER LXXXI.

TO THE REV. E. T. V.—

My dear Friend,

And so you really have fixed the time when you propose to take this desperate leap! Should I congratulate you on your resolution, or condole with you, for it is in sober sadness that you announce it to me? Do you suppose you are about to break a few dozen hearts? Be comforted; young ladies who flirt are in very little danger. It is very rarely that they are *seriously* affected. They have no hearts for deep impressions. There is another consideration too that may be some comfort: you will have no more letters to write. We shall have no more to dread a long separation on earth. We are not romantic or childish in our expectations; but we love each other, and are I hope well persuaded that we are better suited to each other than any persons that we know. On my side I feel this; and I cannot but wonder at the singular good fortune which blesses *me*, in a dependent situation, above the usual privileges of my sex; to be chosen by the only man for whom I ever cared, the only one I think, with whom I could unite my fate without hesitation or scruple. I have confidence in my power of making

you happy too. I have been with you in many changes of fortune and humour, and I never saw any thing to make me doubt it. I have always felt at ease and at home with you, nor do I think that you have inspired such affection in any other.

* * * * *

Such people may flatter you, (which I have never done, nor ever shall do, I should not respect myself if I could use such means to please you) but I am sure they would not make you happy.

My dear Sophy begins to fear that she shall not be present at our marriage. I have hesitated about telling her our new plans, for fear of giving pain to her dear affectionate heart. Perhaps you could manage to go home through London, but I should be sorry to increase your expenses unnecessarily. You would smile to see how anxious Sophy is about my dress. She is not frivolous in dress herself, but she dresses with taste, and she is so afraid that my things should not fit nicely when you see me, or when any body sees me! She is quite wretched if she does not fancy that I look as well as I can be made to look. I have often smiled to see her looking at me, and dressing me, as if I was a child, and had no use in my own hands. She is pleasing herself now with preparing me a white muff and tippet. She heard me admire one that I had seen in that neighbourhood, but I had no idea of her doing such a thing, or I would have said nothing about it. I believe however, her greatest enjoyment consists, in having something in hand that will give pleasure or do good to others. People

talk of the necessity of having some excitement, or life is dull and tiresome: now these are her excitements, and this is one cause of the enthusiastic affection which she inspires. Ah! if Mrs. C—— could witness her laborious, solitary day, uncheered by any earthly pleasure, separated from all that is dear to her in life, she would know that there are others who drink of the same cup, and bear the same burden; but adversity has been blest to the pure and noble mind of my dear sister; it has chastened the native pride of her heart, and led her in humble gratitude to the cross of her Redeemer.

Have you seen Southey's "Pilgrimage to Waterloo?" I have just seen a review, in which an extract is given descriptive of his return to his children. I thought it exquisite, and I could not help reading it to the children, and I was quite provoked to see them so stupid. Well, the time is soon coming when I shall have one to read to. How my heart thrilled at that line where he describes his son waiting for his return, and waving his hat around his happy head, "because his father, teacher, play-mate was come again, come to his only and his studious boy." Ah! how sad I felt, when I read the note at the bottom of the page, which told of the death of this boy of whom the father spoke so fondly! How fleeting is all earthly happiness! Well may I tremble for my earthly hopes. I can read the poetry of passion with great composure. All the ravings of all the lovers that ever wailed in verse, do not move me an atom, but to the poetry of affection I am always alive.—

Write as soon as usual, for fear I should dream again !

Ever yours.

LETTER LXXXII.

TO THE REV. E. T. V—.

My dear Friend,

I am not sorry that I have not many more letters to write. I like writing to you better than to any one, but I shall be very glad to give it up entirely. We are, as you say, much better friends when we are together. Nobody who saw how peaceable we are then, would ever guess that we could dispute so eloquently upon paper. I was, however, in perfect good-humour when I wrote my last letter, and I cannot help thinking that if you had been as much so when you received it, you would not have taken mere badinage for a serious complaint of you. The truth was, I had suffered a good deal of anxiety, and I thought it best to tell you so, to prevent its happening again. Surely it is best to do so. Is not your own statement a proof of this? "I have many times," you say, "given you great cause for anxiety, but you never said any thing about it." But why did you not? For this very reason it was just as likely to happen again. As I did not know it, and as I have a great horror of being tiresome and importunate, I must on such occasions have supposed, that I was only doing what pleased you when I delayed

writing. You never *flattered* me so far as to make any complaint, or gratified my affection by telling me of the anxiety you had suffered on account of my silence. It would have been better on these occasions to have told me at once. There are evils enough in life without adding to them unnecessarily.

Do not say that you seem fated only to give me pain. Think what you have been to me, and what you are. My path in life was difficult and dreary, till your disinterested affection gave me hope even in this world. Whatever I have suffered from others, in you I have found comfort, support, and consolation. The more I have seen of others, the more I have been convinced that you alone have that sympathy of taste and feeling, which constitutes the happiness of the marriage state. Is it very extraordinary that I should tremble at the fear of any thing that may happen to you? Yes, it is, you may well say, unworthy of a christian to be so full of fears. "Thou shalt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee."

I have no wish to be married in my native village. The death of my father has made it a place of very painful recollections. I often think if he were now alive, how much better I should know how to comfort him in many cares and sorrows, which I was too young to think much about when he lived. Yet I have seen him oppressed and sorrowful, seeking in vain for a kindred mind; but this is not a very happy subject, nor are my spirits at this time very high. For the last few days I have felt a degree of disgust for this unfeeling "work-day world," that has been

at times quite oppressive. I may as well tell you the cause, for I should like to know whether you do not look upon it in the same light that I do. I cannot help thinking it as great an atrocity as could well happen in a christian country, and in a parish where we are continually told that we have all the advantage of Gospel light.

A few days ago, a poor boy, who had no relations, and was bound apprentice some years since by the parish to a man of very vile character, was taken ill. The conduct of his master and mistress has been long known to be brutal in the extreme. The detail would fill you with horror, but nobody interfered to succour him. He had been long complaining at times, but they had no medical advice for him. On Sunday night he was struck with death; that is, he could no longer *stand* to his work. All night he was dying; but in the morning, as soon as it was light, his master to save the expense of his funeral, put some straw in a cart, took him out of his bed, laid him upon the straw, and drove him three miles to the workhouse. When he got there, he was still alive, but speechless, drenched with rain, and sensible only to pain, for his disorder was supposed to be water on the brain. He lived an hour or two, in such agony that even the hard-hearted woman who keeps the workhouse shuddered as she told of it, and then died. On Wednesday Mr. O—— buried him, and there is an end of the matter. Now, if such acts of barbarity are to be passed over without notice, or if our laws would not punish the master, I say they

must be lamentably defective. This is the second parish apprentice who has been *known* to be killed by his master. The other I am told was a more atrocious case, and it was passed over in the same way.

I did not conceal my surprise when Mr. O—— said he had done nothing, for I think it was the business of a christian minister to take the part of a fatherless boy in his own parish. “He could have summoned a coroner, but it would have put the parish to expense, and made some of them angry, then they would have staid from church.” So he has been deterred from doing what was a positive duty, for fear of the probable or possible consequences. If notice had been taken of the first instance, it might have prevented this, but all the people in the parish seem incapable of virtuous indignation. The thing did not happen to *them*, and they cannot be lifted out of themselves.

I am almost sorry that I have given you this detail, for it will only shock your feelings; but I have given vent to my indignation, and I feel in rather better humour with this poor world, and willing to hope, that there are places where the people are not so savage as they are in these mountains.

I am delighted to find that you understand the character of my dear Sophy so well. You have exactly marked her distinguishing characteristic. I never saw in any one such perfect disinterestedness. Miss R——, a friend of Mrs. Opie’s, who lived some time in the same house with Sophy, used to say that she never saw any body like her before.

“What costs me an effort,” she said, “is habitual to her; and it seems quite natural to her to make those little sacrifices to the comfort and convenience of others, that I find myself so often fail in.” She has been remarkable for it from childhood. I recollect a thousand instances of it towards myself, which often in silence and solitude rise up before me, and draw tears from my eyes. I think she was as a child the sweetest and most engaging that I ever knew. Once when I saw her since our sad separation, I observed with pain a degree of impatience in her temper, which I had never witnessed before. She was then going to be married to a man, whom she was persuading herself to like in vain. After I left her, I wrote and told her of the change in her which I had observed. It made no alteration in her affection, and this last time of being with her, I found her quite restored to herself.

You need not fear that I shall oppose her wishes and yours, with respect to my dress. I shall yield myself implicitly to your judgment, as I do to Miss L——, my mantua-maker. It would edify you very much to see the profound importance and solemnity, with which she decides between a fringe or a flounce, as if she was fixing the fate of an empire; while I wait the event, in all the humility of one who is not permitted to think for herself in such matters.

Ever yours.

LETTER LXXXIII.

TO THE REV. E. T. V—

My dear Friend,

I have done nothing all this week in my leisure moments but write letters. I had no idea that I had neglected my friends so much. I have been busy lately with needle work, but I do not allow that as a sufficient excuse. It seems I have created quite a sensation by conduct so unusual. Miss G— writes to tell me, what I am sure I did not know, that I have not written to her since August. I was quite ashamed of having so much neglected one who never neglected me, whose kindness in the time of need has been, like the widow's cruse, unfailing and overflowing. Mrs. B— writes again to know when I am coming, and to insist upon my making her a very long visit; and Mrs. K—, having heard that I have some idea of visiting their neighbourhood this spring, begs me to believe that she is most anxious to see me for as long a time as I can possibly make it convenient, and hopes it will be as soon as possible. To all this kindness I have returned suitable answers. I have not fixed any precise time, but I intend leaving this place before you begin your journey.

I do not remember the passage which you quote, but I feel all its beauty, and as I am on the eve of marriage, I need not be ashamed to say that it is per-

fectly true to nature. Of every one who feels like me, it may be said in simple truth and soberness "*il n'y a point d'homme que son amant.*" There is no other for me in all the world. No other has ever had power to raise a wish or thought towards himself. I do not mean to say that I loved you when I first knew you, but I always felt an interest for you which I had never done for any other. I felt something like envy of your male friends, and I remember sighing over the impossibility of my ever becoming intimate with you, or manifesting the pleasure I found in your society, because I was a woman ; so innocent was I of any design, or rather so far was I from any hope, that you would ever be any thing to me. I like to look back upon all this, and I cannot but think the history from beginning to end is a marvellous one. I like to remember the time when I thought I should see you no more ; when your name never passed my lips, and when if it was mentioned by others, I heard in silence, and never ventured an observation that belonged to you. I was quite sure that I should never like another, but I was equally determined that no person should ever know my secret.

Mrs. B—— says, " my baby has been ill again, and my life is so wrapt up in him, that if any thing ails him I am perfectly miserable ; never," she continues, " did I see such comprehension, or such sweetness, in so young a child." I long to see him and his dear mother too. What a true affection she has for you, and what a faithful friend she has been

to me ! I beg leave to say that I have no more liking than she has for your talent of being eagle-eyed to the faults of your dearest friends. I expect you to be "to all my faults a little blind." A very comfortable prospect truly, to go to live with a person who says, that his love only makes him more clear-sighted in picking out flaws and imperfections ! I think I should take flight, but happily I do not believe it. I remember the reign of Mrs. A——, and Miss B——, and Miss C——, and a hundred other mistresses and misses, who certainly were not faultless monsters, to say the least of them ; and I rather think you made their faults virtues. But seriously, we do not either of us, I hope, look for any thing super-human ; nor do we expect that we shall be exempted from the common evils of life ; but we shall bear them together ; and serve our God together ; serve him better, and love him more, I trust, for all his mercies.

I am afraid my poor Mary's strength fails very much under her arduous duties. She is not of a complaining temper, but I think I perceive, what she would gladly conceal, that she is ready to sink under her burden. She has been hesitating too for these three months, about what it would seem one might decide upon in three minutes, whether she shall marry or not. The offer is not I think desirable, and she feels this, but is almost ready to say, "my poverty and not my will consents." I pray that she may be upheld, and guided to do what is right.

Ever yours.

LETTER LXXXIV.

TO THE REV. E. T. V—.

My dear Friend,

I cannot tell you in this letter exactly when I shall leave this place, but I think I shall have fixed the day when I write again. I have had another pressing letter from Mrs. B——, who wants me to come directly. She seems to be quite recovered, only complaining of a head-ache, the consequence of entertaining a party of thirty people! They seem to live in much of the gaiety of life. How strange it will all seem to me, who never see any one but at church, and receive no company but the vicar and curate! On the child's birth-day, Mr. B—— gave a ball, and "a very joyous one it was," she says, "the cause of it being alone sufficient to gladden her heart."

Miss B—— is still there, and will most probably remain there during our visit. How often we shall all wish her a hundred miles off! She who is always used to live in a crowd, what business will she have with *us*, who all love each other, and have no taste for the heartless intimacies of polished life! I do not mean to be prejudiced against her because she is a fine lady, or at least I do not mean to confess it to *you* if I am.

Charlotte T—— is to be married on the tenth of April, to the same person to whom she was engaged when we met last; about whom she used to write so

much nonsense, that I should augur very ill from it, if she were not so very young. She is delighted with the idea of being mistress of a house. How very different we are! My greatest dread is the house and the neighbourhood. The thought of going amongst so many strangers, and being an object of curiosity to a whole neighbourhood, which your being previously known will make me, is very disagreeable. If we were both new to them I should not so much mind, but to encounter them singly as a stranger, does appear to me very formidable; so much so, that sometimes I shrink back, and think I never can encounter them; but I suppose I must.

How glad I am that my *change of condition* is not generally known here. I quite triumph in the idea of escaping all Mr. O——'s raillery. Every body is occupied in talking of Miss H——'s expected marriage, and mine is still nearer, only they do not know it.

It would seem to common observers that these lovers are quite indifferent to each other. Miss W—— and I, talk and wonder. Her brother asks what we would have. "Do we wish the poor man to be always making love, and before company?"—"No, that I am sure we do not."—"Well then, would I explain what is the proper course of conduct under such circumstances?"—It is very difficult to define. I thought of you, who so exactly satisfy me on this point. I should perhaps be dissatisfied with the behaviour of any other in such a case, but yet I am sure you, are never very conspicuous in your

manner to me. You talk to other people, and you do not overpower me with unnecessary and particular attention, yet my heart is full, and satisfied by your tenderness, which does not escape *me*, though it may fail to strike common observers. In short nothing can be more unlike than you and Mr. T——.

Your sermons have at length reached T——. “I am not afraid of him now,” my dear Sophy says, “a faithful minister of the blessed Jesus will be kind to every body, and I am never afraid of such men.” They are all very much delighted with the letter which accompanied the book. “Mr. V—— speaks of you, my dear sister, exactly as I like,” Sophy says; so I rather think you said something very pretty about me, or else it would not so completely have satisfied her. I rejoice to hear that your uncle is so kind as to rejoice so cordially in your marriage. Say to him whatever you think proper for me. Write as soon as usual. Remember it is but a very little time now that you will be required to be so good, so hold out to the end.

Ever yours.

LETTER LXXXV.

TO THE REV. E. T. V—,

My dear Friend,

I regret very much that it is scarcely possible to answer a letter by return of post in this situation. Our letters reach us very late at night, and the post goes out in the morning long before we are up. In consequence of the delay which this occasions on my part, I conclude that you will have been obliged to give an answer before this reaches you, and I can only assist you with my prayers. I have committed the whole affair in humble trust and confidence to the wise Disposer of all events, and I am so fully persuaded that he will guide and influence your judgment, that I think I may promise, let your determination be what it may, that you will have no regrets or complaints on my part to encounter. If you think that, by accepting this appointment, you will increase your comforts, or lessen your anxiety for the future, I am ready to sacrifice any wish of a contrary nature; a small return for all that you have done and suffered for me, but that little would be given cheerfully, and the principle is I hope strong enough to last through life. I know something of the climate, from having read some time ago the journal of a missionary. I believe you are mistaken in supposing that there are no dangers of climate to be encountered. The winters in that part of America are intensely cold, so much so, that this journal speaks of their being obliged to place a stove under their

beds, to prevent their being frozen as they slept. But, if it is the will of God that we should be placed there, he can preserve us, and I am willing to go.

And now, having said this, I may be permitted to urge some points for your consideration. If you accept this offer, you give up all hope of preferment in England. You banish yourself from all your friends and connexions, with a companion whose constitution was never strong, and who may perhaps be prevented by this, from being the solace and comfort that you have a right to expect, and this might operate still more to your disquietude in a land of strangers. On the whole I am inclined to think, that if you have the least chance of preferment at a future period in this country, it will be more for your happiness to wait, and struggle with the difficulties of a narrow income during the first years of our married life, than by thus securing yourself from the dread of pecuniary embarrassment, sacrifice perhaps every thing else.

I am reasoning in the dark all this time, for I am fully persuaded in my own mind that God will order this event in his own wisdom, and I hope I can resign myself fully to his will. I have said more against your taking this situation than for it; for alas! I deeply feel that but for me you would not think of it, but for me you would have no anxieties of this kind; if you had not the dread of an uncertain or inadequate income, you would not think of encountering the dangers of a voyage, or the difficulties of a foreign land. Those who love and value you may wish that we had never met, but heaven forbid that ever *you* should wish so! I am not

pleased with what I have said, and I wish I could talk to you instead of write. While I write I am conducting the business of the school-room, for Miss W—— has occupied the time which I intended for you, and I am sorry on such a subject to write with a divided attention ; but whatever I may have said, I mean only to express my perfect acquiescence in your wishes, or rather your decision, whatever it may be.

That God Almighty may hear my prayers, and guide and influence you in mercy not in judgment, is the anxious desire of

Yours ever.

LETTER LXXXVI.

TO THE REV. E. T. V——.

My dear Friend,

I perceive that you have given up this American business with regret, and this makes me rather uneasy. I cannot refrain from writing to you by this day's post, though I am afraid you will be vexed with me before I have done this letter ; but I may perhaps be able to lessen your regret for giving up this appointment, which I must think you are quite mistaken in believing so desirable. How do you think a winter of at least seven months would suit your constitution ? Mr. Marsden says that he sat by the fire with two great coats on, and was prevented from the exercise of any ministerial duty, be-

cause the people were afraid to assemble lest the frost should seize them. Iron snapt in two like wood ; and he himself was so affected by the severity of the climate, that he was compelled to return with a complaint on his chest, which he said he should carry with him to the grave. It is some time since I read this, but I well remember the passages, because in reading them I thought what a mercy it was, that you had not accepted the offer of preferment that was made you some time ago.

With this persuasion in my mind, you will believe that I heard of this renewed offer with no very happy presages. However, I must think that in this point I had no right to oppose you. I know very well that I am the cause of much anxiety to you, and I feel that I ought to acquiesce in any measure that you might conceive likely to lessen it. With this idea I soon made up my mind, and after resigning the whole business into the hands of God, I slept as tranquilly as ever I did in my life. In the morning I wrote to you, and I was not at all aware that you would perceive any thing but a desire to conform myself to your wishes. After the letter was gone, I was not unhappy, for I thought I had made a sacrifice and done what was right.

If I had continued in this frame of mind it would have been well, but Mr. and Mrs. H—— returned home, and in the course of the evening I told Mrs. H—— what was uppermost in my thoughts, not supposing that she would concern herself any more than she generally does about other people's business.

But I did her wrong: she evinced the most lively interest in the affair, and expressed a determination to write to you herself. Mr. H—— came in and she told him. I listened to his opinion with more attention. He thought I had done wrong to agree to such a proposal. My very *sublime heroism* appeared to his sober judgment nothing but folly. “We may be supposed,” he said, “to know your frame as well as any body, and I confess it appears to me very unlikely that you should survive an American winter. What do you think of it yourself?” I said I did not expect that I should be able to endure it. “Then what is your motive for engaging in such an expedition?” I said I thought it would be wrong to place myself as an obstacle, and whatever was the consequence I should be in the path of duty. “That was all very well to talk about,” he said, “but he really thought, if he was the gentleman, he should not consider that I had dealt fairly by him, in leading him to suppose that I was not only ready but able to accompany him, when I had in reality no other expectation than that of dying, and leaving him alone to his fate.”

This way of stating the business made me very uncomfortable. I was perplexed, and dissatisfied with myself. The next morning Mrs. H—— was intent upon writing to you. I entreated her not to do this, for I was very anxious to save you unnecessary trouble. She said it was her duty to do so. I knew when she once thought it was a point of duty, she would do it, and I began to despair, when she

said, "will you sit down directly and write, and say what I tell you?" I laughed, and said I would not promise to do that; but the idea suddenly struck me that I could get out of the scrape at once by writing to Mrs. B——, and putting her in possession of the whole business. I said her affection for us both would lead her, I knew, to take every step that she might judge likely to influence your decision according to her wishes. So I sat down and wrote, and I know you will be vexed with me for this piece of folly, but I pray you to pardon me, on promise of better conduct in future.

I propose leaving this place for T—— on Tuesday the eighteenth. You will write, and apprise me of your coming, when I am there.

I dread parting with my children, but nothing can be better timed than my leaving them. The eldest of my boys is now grown beyond a governess, and ought to go to school. My own boy, Edward, is as yet quite manageable. Notwithstanding his proud spirit, and stern independent temper, I have never found any difficulty in managing him. I wish I could draw him as he lies now at full length upon the floor, playing with his kitten, only wishing that she could talk. "Now, ma'am, don't you think the cat loves me?" I should like to escape taking leave of this boy, but this is a subject I did not mean to enter upon to you.

Ever yours.

LETTER LXXXVII.

TO THE REV. E. T. V—.

My dear Friend,

I think it is very evident that you begin to be tired of me as a correspondent, and I suppose I must forgive you, for I am not at all behind hand with you in this respect. I have quite written myself out, and though I have a hundred things that I wish to *say* to you, yet I have not patience to sit down, and put them on paper. Will you ever be tired of my talking, I wonder? It is possible in the course of time, but I do not think I talk so much as I used to do. I sometimes think I have lost the facility that I used to have in conversation; indeed I never could talk to all sorts of persons, and it seems to me that I am now qualifying for a patient hearer, under the patronage of Miss B—, who is very willing to take the talking department upon herself.

I had a very pleasant journey hither; that is, the latter part of it was pleasant, the beginning was, as might be expected, very sad. I could not see so many kind friends for the last time without a great deal of pain. I spent therefore one day in mourning, but, after staying a night at C— on my way, I seemed to have left all my cares behind me. I had a most joyous welcome here, and I found by your letter, which was here waiting for me, that you took my folly in this American business very kindly. I

fully expected a little scolding for making it known so unnecessarily.

I would not have you anticipate too much from my conduct as a wife. I hope I shall make a good one, but I have learned to distrust myself, and I have observed that kind husbands do not in general meet with kind wives. The fact is, they spoil them. A tyrannical husband makes a patient good wife; and so, on the other hand, a *masterly* wife makes an obedient husband. I have not spirit enough to *contend* for the mastery, but I should not wonder if I got it sometimes by dint of teasing.

I am writing as fast as I can, and am very likely to fill my paper without saying any thing that I ought; but I have only a few minutes while little master is being got to sleep, for Emily insists upon my giving all my time and thoughts to her. I long for you to come, if for no other reason, because I think you will quite recover your health here. I already feel quite a new creature. I seem however to miss some one from the circle, and when the door opens I detect myself looking up for you to follow, it seems so natural to see you here. I hope you will leave all your cares behind you. I think you will not be able to keep them here, for this seems to be a place of entire forgetfulness to every thing but the enjoyments of the passing hour.

I rejoice to hear that you have made so great a pecuniary sacrifice for a charitable purpose, even though it may occasion us some inconvenience. I cannot help thinking that my prayers will be heard,

and that we shall have the blessing of God on our union.

I said I would tell you something about this dear wonderful baby. I think I had best say nothing at present, for it is to be hoped he will be in a better humour when you come. He is a sweet little fair boy. I should not wonder if he had his mother's mind, and his father's temper, for he is very fractious; but it is unfair to judge of him at this time, when he has just lost his nurse. If his mamma looks over my shoulder, I shall get my trimmings; but I am pretty safe from that, for the young gentleman keeps her fully employed in soothing his humours. His nurse is gone out for ten days, and he will suffer no one else to touch him except his mamma. She takes all the charge of him, by night and by day, till his nurse comes back—a time which I very much long for. He will neither sleep, nor walk, nor do any thing that you wish him; however he is certainly a most intelligent child; he seems to understand all that is said to him, and he would be very engaging if he did not cry so.

Miss B—— is the finest lady I ever beheld. I dare say she will have no kind of objection to flirt a little with you, if you should find yourself very much at a loss in the absence of your idols; and she will do all the talking part herself. Your presence will perhaps relieve me, for, according to our present system, my post is rather fatiguing. In the evening, Mrs. B—— goes to put little master to bed; Mr. B—— goes to sleep, or else visits the stable to see

the horses; and I am left to think what I shall say to Miss B——, who reads every thing that ever was written, and talks well, and sensibly, and critically, upon the merits and demerits of all authors living or dead, till twelve o'clock at night.

I want to look at your letter, to see if there is any thing *particular in it to answer*, as you say, but the little boy is playing with it, and taking any thing from him against his will is one of the impossibilities. I had better leave off here, lest my letter should be compared to a stuffed turkey again. I wonder at your sauciness, but nobody was ever so mismanaged before. I am sure if I manage you as a husband, as I have done as a lover, you will be good for nothing. All your good conduct comes from yourself, I suppose you will say, and all your sauciness I may thank myself for. What can be expected of your conduct in future? We shall see—till then

Farewell.

FINIS.

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